

Highlands' Newspaper

FREE

Volume 7, Number 14

PDF Version - www.HighlandsInfo.com

Thursday, April 2, 2009

This Week in Highlands

• Friends of Panthertown work days, last Thursday of every month. Call Nina Elliott at 828-526-9938 (ext 258).

• Collections for men and women overseas at Chestnut Hill Retirement community. To schedule a drop-off call (828) 787-2114.

• At Health Tracks at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, exercise classes. Call 828-526-1FIT. Mon., Wed., Fri.

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

Wed., & Fri.

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

Mondays

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

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

Tuesdays

• Highlands Rotary Club meets at noon at the Highlands Conference Center.

Wednesdays

• Mountain Top 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.

Thursdays

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

• Taize worship at 7 p.m. at the Lutheran Chapel of the Holy Family, 2152 Dillard Road. Call Chaplain Margaret Howell 828-526-2905.

2nd & 4th Fridays

• Community Drum Circle at the Highlands Rec Park, 6-7:30 p.m. Call 421-0551.

Fridays & Saturdays

• At Highlands Wine & Cheese, at Falls on Main, complimentary wine samplings during business hours.

Saturdays

• At Highlands Wine & Cheese, Falls on Main, Wine Flights from 4-6:30 p.m. Five wines, artisan cheeses and specialty foods. \$19 ea.

Thursday, April 2

• Bingo at the Community Building from 6:30-8:30.

Saturday, April 4

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a 5-mile moderate hike to Rock Gorge and Big Bend Falls on the Chattooga River. Call leader Virginia Talbot, 526-4904.

Sunday, April 5

• At First Baptist Church on Main Street Easter musical program "Come Touch the Robe" at 6:30 p.m.

Weekend Weather:

FRI	SAT	SUN
		
51 / 44F	62 / 36F	60 / 40F

Electric rates to increase 10% May 1

The decision has been made. Highlands electric rates will increase 10% on May 1 with the increase evident in the May 25 bill.

Duke Energy's new contract with the town is March 1, 2010 through December 31, 2029. Duke wants a wholesale rate increase of 48% taken in 16% increments per year over the next few years to bring Highlands on par with other wholesale rates and customers in

its system by fiscal year 2012-2013.

For Highlanders, the initial 10% retail rate increase will be followed by a 4% increase July 1, 2011, 4% July 1, 2012, 4% July 1, 2013 and 3% July 1, 2014.

For customers with a \$100 a month utility bill the initial 10% hike increase will be an extra \$10 per month. Currently, of the 107 electric utilities in the state, Highlands has the second lowest rate

and Duke Energy has the fifth lowest rate.

At the April 1 Town Board meeting, on Fatland's recommendation, the board unanimously OK'd the initial 10% rate increase and subsequent increase timeline, authorized Duke Energy to handle the renewable energy portfolio on behalf of Highlands and to estab-

• See ELECTRIC page 13

TDC has counter plan for room tax payout

The Highlands Travel & Tourism Development Commission (TDC) rallied Tuesday to devise a counter proposal for the manner of disbursement of the county's room tax money and the responsibilities of the county finance department and the TDCs.

Under particular scrutiny was item number four concerning both the "TDC Responsibilities" and the "County Responsibilities" of County Manager Jack Horton's proposal that was presented at the March 23 County Commission meeting.

The fourth responsibility for the TDC is: "Provide county finance director contracts or other purchasing documents for pre-audit and provide approved invoices for payment." This refers to responsibility number two - "Work with the chamber to investigate and recommend approval of specific activities and contracts for services, (specifically, as they apply to the chamber.)

The fourth responsibility for the county is: "Issue checks for approved invoices directly to the vendors from appropriate line items."

TDC members and County Commissioner Brian McClellan, who sits on the TDC board, believe

• See TDC page 12



An 'X' marks the spot

Orange Xs on numerous trees lining Horse Cove Road as it descends from town to the Cove have residents concerned.

Highlands Public Service Director Lamar Nix, said the state asked his department to mark the trees that will need to be trimmed or taken down for utility lines that will soon be erected along the road.

Last year when copper was getting big bucks on commodities market, thieves stole the copper lines from a utility line far from view - an area only accessible by foot.

Though the town isn't going to replace the lines with copper again, the incident did bring to light the remoteness of the infra-

structure.

"Whenever those lines went down due to a storm, crews could only access them by foot, which just isn't reasonable," said Nix. "The copper theft initiated the move of the lines, but to serve the citizens in the Cove in a timely manner, we need to move the lines along the road where they are easy to access."

The town is awaiting the permit from NC DOT, and while waiting, the state asked the town to mark the trees that would be affected.

Nix said it's unfortunate that some trees will have to come down, but service to utility-paying customers and insurance against future vandalism is paramount.

- Kim Lewicki

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8 teachers needed for new role in district

Though it's priority number three of the Macon County Schools Strategic Plan for 2008-09, it may be the most critical component of all.

At the March 23 Board of Education meeting, Superintendent Dan Brigman presented a plan that will satisfy the required state budget cut of \$460,000, while enabling the district to keep its employees, and meet the state requirement that all Macon County teachers meet professional preparation guidelines aligned with state priorities - namely that NC public schools be led by 21st Century professionals.

Brigman believes by using eight currently employed teachers as Instructional Facilitators in each of the 11 schools in the county, particularly in grades K-8, Macon County can meet that requirement.

The Instructional Facilitators will be part of a teacher support system which will help all teachers K-12 reach outlined goals and objectives in the strategic plan.

Those objectives are High Student Performance, Healthy, Safe, Orderly & Caring Schools, Quality Teacher, Administration & Staff, Strong Family, Community & Business Support, and Effective & Effi-

• See NEW ROLE page 14

• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• Q & A WITH FATLAND •

• LETTERS •

Subject: Highlands rising electric rates

1. Why did Duke wait so many years to raise Highlands' rates? When does Duke plan on raising wholesale rates?

Both the Town of Highlands and Western Carolina University have not had a wholesale rate increase since 1996. Some say we fell underneath Duke Energy's radar screen. There is probably some validity to that belief as there has been a tremendous amount of change in the electric utility industry over the past twelve (12) years. The wholesale market has been deregulated since 1996 and Duke Energy has undergone two major mergers.

Duke Energy has notified the Town of Highlands that it intends to raise wholesale rates on March 1, 2010 by 16%.

2. What is a "rate stabilization fund?" Why form one now?

A rate stabilization fund is established to shield the Electric Fund from the financial effects of extraordinary circumstances. Currently the Town of Highlands does not have a rate stabilization fund. However, Duke Energy has put the Town on notice that it intends to raise wholesale rates 48% over the next three years. The Town Board has an opportunity to establish a rate stabilization fund in advance of the Duke Energy increase. If the 10% rate increase is approved, all monies collected over and above our current customer billings between May 2009 through February 2010 would be deposited into the rate stabilization fund. The Town will use this rate stabilization fund to smooth out our projected rate increases.

3. How is the formation of a "rate stabilization fund" beneficial to the town government of Highlands....how is it beneficial to its citizens?

A rate stabilization fund is very beneficial to the Town Board, its citizens and business owners. This allows the current Town Board and future Town Boards to use monies from the Rate Stabilization Fund to offset large increases that may be passed onto us from Duke Energy. For example, Duke Energy has notified the Town that it intends to increase wholesale rates by 48% over the next three years. By saving up funds in advance of the wholesale rate hike through a 10% rate increase in May 2009,



the Town Board will not have another rate increase until July 1, 2010.

4. Since Rate Stabilization Fund for the Electric Fund is important, couldn't the town use some of its undesignated General Fund balance to build it up fast? And, if so, how would those effect citizens' utility rates?

Yes, the Town could use fund balance. However, a sound and prudent policy is to use fund balance for capital projects, capital equipment and emergency situations. Using fund balance for General Fund or Electric Fund operations is normally not a good practice to follow. A healthy fund balance helps the credit and financial position of the Town. The strong financial position of the Town of Highlands is due in large part to the current Board and Mayor and past Board and past Mayors who have followed a policy of not spending fund balance on current operations.

The Town of Highlands has enjoyed a low wholesale rate since 1996. This low

• See Q & A page 5

Does a 'consent agenda' represent an 'open' or 'closed' government?

Dear Editor,

In reading Mayor Mullen's March 26 column, he states that the Town Board has "gone to what is called a 'consent' agenda. That is, routine reports or decisions do not necessarily have to be discussed unless a commissioner wants to pull it out of the consent agenda for further discussion or information."

If I understand this correctly, it means that most decisions have already been made by the board and are foregone conclusions before the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

If I understand this correctly, it means

that the public has been left out of the loop, i.e., we don't know what they've decided until it's a fait accompli. We are denied the opportunity (right?) to hear the subject discussed because a decision has already been made, whether we like it or not?

Do I understand this correctly? If so, this is apparently the new trend in all levels of American government, the most blatant example being Washington, D.C. Who, exactly, are our elected representatives representing?

Alice M. Nelson
Highlands

Response to "TDC and county connection still unclear"

Several comments reported in this article which appeared in the Highlands Newspapers' March 26 edition warrant further explanation particularly those comments addressing the Tourism Development Commission (TDC) meeting in February beginning on page 23.

The TDC met on February 13 for the express purpose of reviewing and acting

upon the proposed Occupancy Tax budget prepared by the Chamber of Commerce for presentation to the county for fiscal year 2009-2010 beginning July 2009.

This budget is based upon estimated tax revenue produced by the 3% room tax levied on all accommodations in the county, collected by the County and administered by the Chamber of Commerce under contract with the County. Net collections, after deducting processing fees, generated in the Highlands area are disbursed to the Highlands Area Chamber of Commerce with whom Macon County has contracted to administer these funds continuing a program which has been in place since 1986.

Incidentally, these tax collections are specifically legislated for the express purpose of promoting travel and tourism in the Highlands District and Macon County. This budget is one of two budgets overseen by the Chamber. The other is the Chamber of Commerce budget, a private 501 C (6) non-profit organization separately financed by membership dues. Both budgets are separately audited each year by a Certified Public Accountant.

Following discussion the voting members of the TDC approved the proposed Occupancy Tax Budget. The proposed budget is to be submitted by the TDC to the Macon County Manager for further review and the final approved budget will become part of the larger county budget available to the public.

Unlike the county budget, the Chamber of Commerce budget is not considered a public document and is not subject to

• See LETTERS page 22

LETTERS-TO-THE EDITOR-POLICY

We reserve the right to reject or edit submissions. **NO ANONYMOUS LETTERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.** Views expressed are not necessarily those of Highlands' Newspaper. Please EMAIL letters by Monday at 5 p.m. There is a 500-word limit without prior approval.

Highlands' Newspaper

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• WEDDING •

Buchanan and Mullarkey

Carol Jane Buchanan and Sean Mullarkey were united in marriage, in a 2 p.m. ceremony, on Saturday, March 14, 2009. Vows were spoken before Pastor David Beam at Cashiers United Methodist Church.

The bride was proceeded into the church by her son, Micah G. Buchanan. Micah presented his grandmothers with Gerber daisies and then served as ring bearer.

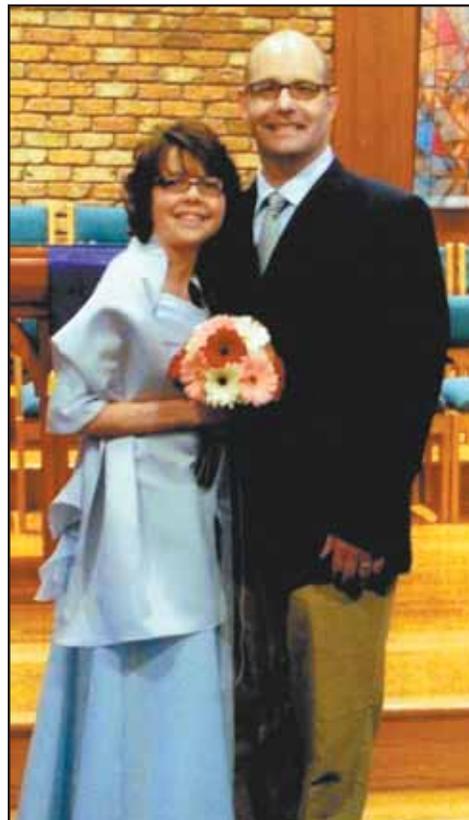
Carol Jane is the daughter of Floyd "Smokey" and Lassie Buchanan of the Norton Community in Cashiers, N.C.

Sean is the son of Lee and Larry Shankle of Franklin, N.C., and Don and Willa Mullarkey of Highlands, N.C.

Special guests attending were Grace Chavis, grandmother of the groom, Kathy and Oscar Crane, and Joanna and Roman Placko and son Dominik.

After a honeymoon to St. Simons Island, GA, the couple returned home to Highlands.

Carol Jane is an RN, and the school nurse at Blue Ridge School. Sean is the owner of Bear Mountain Outfitters in Highlands.



New Kindergarten start-date could effect area pre-schools

Highlands School Kindergarten registration is April 14

Beginning with the 2009-10 school year, children must be five-years-old by Aug. 31 to enter public school. Under last year's rules, students had until Oct. 16 to turn five.

House Bill 150, Every Child Ready to Learn, which was approved in 2007, moved the cut-off date for children to be old enough to start kindergarten back.

This means that many parents will have to pay for child care a year longer than anticipated and it could put a strain on the county's available child care providers – all of which have waiting lists.

"The change of dates for age qualification for kindergarten will keep more children home this year. I would think that this will put a strain on child care resources since roughly 10% more 4-year-olds will not be going to kindergarten," said Macon County Commission Chairman Ronnie Beale. "This is a one-time adjustment that will definitely impact child care resources this year. The county has formulated a child care committee to examine the child care situation in Macon County. The goal of this committee is to identify the need for more child care, the affordability of child care in our community and what can be done to fill this need."

Legislative analysts estimate that about 15,000 children in the state will have to start

kindergarten a year later because of the change, which was made to make sure all students are ready for formal school when they start.

They hope that the change will address an issue that has played out in kindergarten classes: having 4-year-olds in the same kindergarten classes with 6-year-olds whose parents have held them back. In North Carolina, children aren't required to start formal education until age 7.

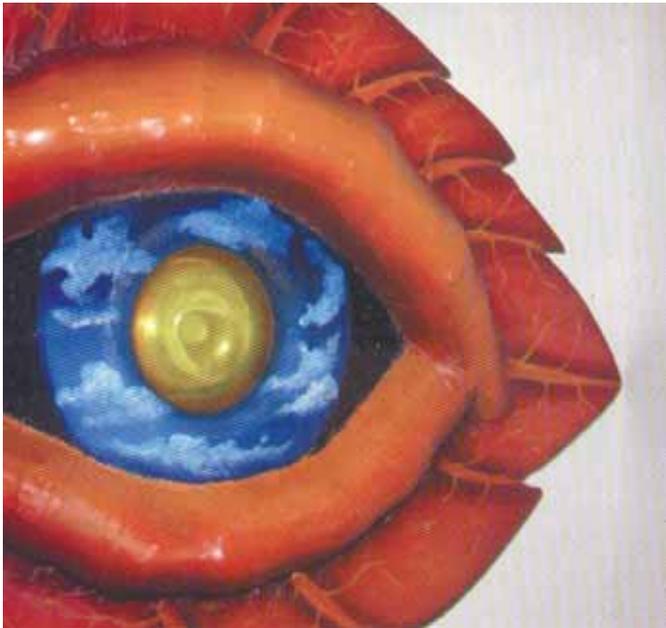
Most educators agree that five is the best age to start formal education. Early childhood educators said a classroom of students ranging from ages four to six can leave the younger children at a disadvantage as they try to catch up with older classmates who are often more physically, emotionally, mentally and socially developed.

Educators also said most 4-year-olds just aren't ready for formal education.

The revised law moves the legal school entry age up by a month and a half to reduce drop-out rates in later grades and make sure students are ready for formal school when they begin kindergarten.

Oftentimes, the catch-up game continues through middle and high school, where younger students are less likely to take on leadership roles.

• See START DATE page 12



HS graduate Caitlin Rawlins exhibit "The Eyes Have It: The Reciprocating Gaze" Highsmith Gallery UNC-A April 24-May 5 Opening Night Reception Friday, April 24 6-8 p.m.

THE INNER WILLY

WRITTEN BY BETTYE KNAPP
DIRECTED BY RONNIE SPILTON
JIM GORDON

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• **LAUGHING AT LIFE** •

A chicken in every pot

Wake up, Highlands, it's spring and summer is rapidly approaching. The cotton is growing and the living is easy. One hundred dollar bills are being printed in bulk and the financial crisis appears to be over. Everyone will soon be rich.

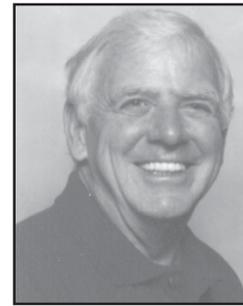
Kudos to Highlands' leaders for grabbing some of Obama's stimulus money to buy new toys for our town. Now that I'm finally on the Obama bandwagon, I approve and wish them well.

Here are my suggestions. What's the single biggest problem Highlands grapples with each and every year? Yep, you guessed it, a parking problem that seems to never go away. What, you see empty parking spots everywhere? Not to worry. When those fat cats from AIG come rolling into town this summer to spend your hard earned money, they'll need a place to park their Rolls'. Let's build them an expensive indoor parking garage and put this issue to rest forever. Relax, it's all free.

Also, this is a perfect time to spend some stimulus money on affordable housing for the less fortunate. I suggest the vacant land at Highlands Country Club would be an excellent place to start, especially since our leaders now have the money to buy prime land. In a gesture of good will and kindness, I think all of Highlands' country club folks should welcome the less fortunate into their neighborhoods and help with the building of homes on all that open land. Just look at the total amount of land being wasted for those stupid golf courses. Come on, folks, socialists don't play golf! Get with the program.

Also, as part of our good will toward man, we should create programs that move black people to Highlands. Where are all the black folks? I know they're around 'cause I've seen them on TV. It's terrible we have a black president and no black people in Highlands. If we're going to spend his stimulus money, I know he would be pleased to learn we have become more multi-cultural. There are simply too many white folks in Highlands, don't ya think? I personally know a whole bunch of very nice, respectable Haitians from my days as a policeman who would love to live in Highlands. If our president would give me some stimulus money, say a half million bucks, I know I could persuade them to move here.

Now here's the best part. Highlands



Fred Wooldridge

Feedback is encouraged!
email:
askfredanything@aol.com

can now build, thanks to the good will of taxpayers and billions in newly printed money, a brand new Town Hall and separate police department. We can also have the finest ABC store in the country. I'm hoping for a take-out window so Highlanders don't have to leave their cars to get drunk. Take-out windows are also great because it lessens the chance of bumping into your pastor while making a purchase inside the store.

How about a band shelter for Dog Poop Park? Would that be awesome? I envision litter boxes at each corner of the park where Fido can do his thing while listening to band-shell music, like *Who Let the Dogs Out*. Litter box attendants will keep them clean. In fact, Litter Box Specialist could be a new job title on Highlands' employment roster, all paid for with stimulus money. My mind is awash with ideas.

I hope Highlands' leaders don't waste this new-found money on stupid stuff like paved roads and sewers for everyone living in town. Also, there's no need for better street lighting on the back streets. This is really boring stuff that we've been doing without anyway.

My mind is still racing. Could Highlands put a Volkswagen Beetle in everyone's garage? How bout a chicken in every pot? Also, following our president's lead, let's all start a Victory Garden. I'm thinking watermelons. I love watermelon. I'm feeling so stimulated.

Since there will probably be lots and lots of money left over, how about a bonus package for our mayor and each town board member? They'll be exhausted after spending all that tax money and would enjoy a little kick-back...oops, I mean they'll enjoy time to kick-back. I think a couple of million for each member would be appropriate, don't you? ...OK, OK, make it four.

For me, I want for nothing. I have a wife who loves me and gives me more stimulus than I can handle. We've moved what little money we have to a place where Congress can't find or spend it. I'm a happy guy watching this unfold. It's more fascinating then even my warped mind could have imagined.

I look forward to Highlands becoming a busy multi-cultural boom town with many ethnic groups participating in our growth. In a spirit of brotherly love, I have

• See WOOLDRIDGE page 5

• THE VIEW FROM HERE •

Does greed epitomize our country?

Most folks would have no problem living on \$53,000 per week. Such a weekly budget might seem a wee bit excessive, even obscene, or down right vulgar. That's more than the average annual income of an American family. But the average American doesn't dwell in the rarified world of the super rich. Marie David-Douglas, a Swedish Countess, and soon to be ex-wife of former United Technologies CEO, George David, has filed for divorce and asked the judge to invalidate a post nuptial agreement which provided \$43 million in the event of a divorce.

Did anybody know there were still countesses? And if there really are countesses shouldn't they have their own money? Why would it necessary for her to prospect in divorce court for her husband's fortune? George David is a rich man. His estimated net worth is \$329 million. The countess wants a bigger chunk of it than the post nuptial agreement guaranteed. It doesn't matter to her that theirs was a seven year, childless, and obviously failed, marriage. She wants \$100 million and \$130,000 per month. She claims that she gave up a lucrative career as an investment banker to marry Mr. David. I have no idea how much she made as an investment banker, but \$43 million for seven years of marriage seems like ample compensation. Whatever one might think about the excesses of executive compensation, it is indisputable that Mr. David showed up for work and created value for shareholders. Mrs. David-Douglas hosted dinner parties and spent money.

Court documents paint an interesting picture of the Countess's life style. She claims \$27,300 per week for maintenance of homes in the United States and Sweden, and \$8,000 per week in travel expenses. It's not cheap to keep track of all those houses. But didn't they retire the Concorde? She spends a hefty \$4,500 for clothes. There is the \$2,200 per week salary for her private assistant and \$1,570 for the care of her horse. She spends, or claims to spend, \$1,480 for domestic help. One can't say she isn't generous. Dining and entertainment add \$1,500 to the total and we're not quite finished. Expenses include \$1,000 for health and skin care, \$600 for flowers, \$250 for a personal trainer, and my favorite,



Dr. Henry Salzarulo

Feedback is encouraged.
email:
hsalzarulo@aol.com

\$650 for dry cleaning. Does her trainer realize that, compared to her horse, he is grossly underpaid? See how easy it is to burn \$53,000 a week. If a person really spends over \$4,000 a week on clothes, her dry cleaning bill should be zero. She must discard her entire wardrobe weekly.

I'd like to draw a moral, but the numbers speak for themselves. The Countess is an extraordinarily greedy woman. She claims that she was coerced into signing the \$43 million post nup. I wish someone would coerce me to accept a deal like that. I can't believe she really believes she is entitled to the money or has somehow earned it. Rather she reasons that there is no good reason not to go for a bigger chunk of a very impressive fortune.

I don't know either of the parties. I don't now who abused whom or who was guilty of infidelity. If her life was so bad she might have just walked out and returned to investment banking. I can't help but sympathize with the man in this case, but I'll consider opposing views. I hope the judge invalidates the agreement and pays her not what she is asking, \$100 million and \$130,000 per month, but what she is worth, which is tuition for a refresher course in investment banking, or alternative job retraining. Why is she entitled to life-long luxury for a failed seven-year marriage? People don't get paid after they get fired. It's like giving a guy, who quits his job at the bank, a third of its assets. So put that in your \$200,000 pipe and light it with your \$20,000 lighter. A demand like this makes those AIG bonuses seem almost justifiable.

... WOOLDRIDGE continued from page 4

invited many of my Arab friends to come to Highlands and dig for oil.

Per capita, I envision more construction cranes here than in Dubai. People will pour in by the thousands to get jobs created with stimulus money and we'll have ample parking for all of them. The opportunities are endless, especially in the housing market as Highlands' WASP's evacuate the area and we start to feel the real effects of change. Isn't this exciting?

... Q & A continued from page 2

wholesale rate has allowed us to have some of the lowest rates in the State of North Carolina. The Town of Highlands has the 2nd lowest retail rates in the State of North Carolina.

To use fund balance from the General Fund and/or from the Electric Fund Capital Reserves delays the inevitable. The problem is that the rates charged our customers must eventually catch up with Duke Energy.

This past year, the Town Board did not raise utility rates for electric, water or sewer. Nor did the Town Board raise the General Fund tax rate.

5. Could the town accept less of a return on its reselling of Duke power? If so, what impact would that have on the Town's financial position? If the Town accepts a lower rate of return, what impact would this have on utility rates?

Yes. However, a lower profit would have an impact on the Town's Capital Im-

• See Q & A page 6

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• HIS & HERS •

Getting rid of toxic Congressmen

By John Armor

The mantra today is that we must get the toxic assets out of the banks and other financial institutions. That way, the banks will be on a sound footing, going forward. That may or may not be true. But, who are the experts assuring us that various steps are needed, now?

Well, two key people in this process are Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass) and Senator Chris Dodd (D-Conn.). Barney Frank had a sexual relationship with the federal official in charge of new products from Fannie Mae. Those new products were the bundled toxic assets that collapsed and started the meltdown.

Frank also accepted large contributions from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac sources. And he was saying in Congress that these government-created corporations were "sound" just before the bottom fell out of the financial markets. Lastly, Frank has been at the head of the pitchfork and torches brigade, marching up the hill towards the AIG castle.

This is not to say that the AIG bonuses are a good idea. They could and should have been cut off at the knees. But isn't Frank trying to channel the people's anger against others, rather than against him and his allies in the government? Can we trust any judgments and actions by the government now, while Frank is still there as a toxic Congressman?

Turn your attention to Senator Dodd. He received the maximum political donations from Fannie and Freddie sources of all 535 members of Congress. In a close second place on that donations list was Senator Barack Obama (D-Ill.). Whatever happened to him after he left the Senate?

Dodd also received a special rate, high-dollar mortgage from Countrywide. Countrywide was one of the first large mortgage companies to collapse. A year after Dodd's sweetheart deal was first discovered, he is still lying to the press about what he knew and what he received.

There is also the point the press never discusses, that Dodd is a notorious drunk. There should be a plaque on the floor of the second floor front room of La Brasserie on Massachusetts Avenue for a legendary event involving both Dodd and Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.)

Is Dodd a toxic Senator? Can the actions of the federal government be trusted while Dodd is still in power?

But the whole blame does not rest with Congress. A very telling moment occurred this week when Secretary of the Treasury Tim Geithner testified before Dodd's Committee in the House. A Representative from Minnesota as I recall and a Republican, asked Geithner to state the portion of the Constitution that authorized what he was doing. Geithner recited laws passed by Congress.

She asked him the same question again, what was the authority in the Constitution. Geithner then sat in his chair like a deer caught in headlights. He had no clue whether the Constitution offered any authority for his actions. In that, he represented his administration. If you can get it through Congress, it's legal; never mind that ancient document.

Geithner is, of course a tax cheat. He paid some of his back taxes when he was in the nomination process. But for the years where the statute of limitations had run, he didn't pay the taxes but he kept the money the World Bank had given him to pay those

taxes.

Is Geithner a toxic bureaucrat, who must be removed immediately?

Then there's Rahm Emanuel, Chief of Staff in the White House. He was paid about \$300,000 during his 14-month stint on the board of Fannie Mae. At the same time, Franklin Raines was CEO of Fannie Mae. Raines deliberately misstated the corporate books by about \$20 billion. That hid the coming collapse of Fannie Mae, and also increased the bonuses to the board members. Is he a toxic public official whose very presence in the government pollutes all the proposals?

Here we are at the end of this column and there's no mention of Charlie Rangel (D-NY) who's in a position to write the tax laws, but feels no compunction to obey them.

There is little that the American people can do immediately about toxic Congressmen and others. But if we really are "as mad as Hell, and not going to take it any more," the first proof of that will be the number of incumbents in the House and Senate who go down to defeat in 2010.

• About the Author: John Armor practiced law in the Supreme Court for 33 years. He now lives on the Eastern Continental Divide in the Blue Ridge of North Carolina. John_Armor@aya.yale.edu

... Q & A continued from page 5

provement Program for Electric, Water, Sewer, and General Funds. The Town of Highlands has averaged a 5% profit from its Electric Fund. Each month, the profit is transferred to Capital Reserves. In the past, Electric Fund Capital Reserves have paid for capital projects and equipment in the Electric Fund, Water & Sewer Fund and General Fund. The Town Board would then need to decide on whether or not to raise water and sewer rates or, perhaps, property taxes to fund necessary infrastructure improvements and major repairs to its system. In addition, the Town Board would have to decide if it desires to finance capital projects and equipment. Currently the Town of Highlands does not have any debt due in large part to the policy of transferring Electric Fund profits to Capital Reserves.

•See Q & A page 14



Michelle Mead-Armor & John Armor
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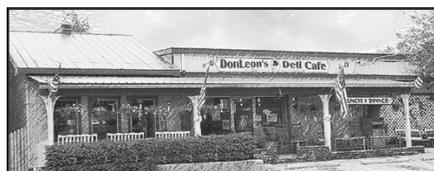
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• CONSERVATIVE POV •

Now wait just a minute...

Recently, a fine reader of this stellar publication wrote a letter-to-the-editor wherein a previous column of mine was labled something like "the least obnoxious of the conservative columnists" or "less obnoxious..." or whatever. Well, I have a reputation to uphold that has taken decades to establish, and to be called less obnoxious than anybody is an affront to everything I worked hard for. I'm sure the reader/writer meant well, but it hurt me deeply. I was gratified that, after reading the letter, my friends assured me I had nothing to worry about, and that I was as obnoxious as ever. Well, all right, but enough about me.



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

Let's see, what shall we talk about? The messiah's spending plans come to mind. The AIG distraction tends to replace the thoughts of irrational spending. Not that \$165 million or \$220 million given in bonuses to AIG execs isn't real money, but the stink raised about it really is serving its intended purpose, and that is to take the voters' eyes off the ball.

Hysteria reigns, death threats abound, and members of the administration join the chorus of irate taxpayers, shocked at the revelation. The liars, however, knew about the bonuses, enabled the bonuses and incited the masses to raise a major fuss about the bonuses and forget about the cumulative bailout of 1,000 times the amount of the bonuses. One good thing resulted from all the hoopla; Chris Dodd was exposed as the phony that he is.

I started out vowing to myself that I'd lay off terrible Timmy Geithner this week; and then he made the pronouncement that businesspeople are no longer capable of making business decisions and need the help of government "experts" to oversee business activity. Not only banks that had received TARP money; not only other businesses that received bail-out money; not only businesses deemed critical to the national security interests; all businesses. This news was shared by the announcement that the U.S. Postal Service is so well man-

aged that it needs a bailout of only \$3 billion this year to stay in business. Isn't there a scripture that goes, "physician, heal thyself?"

I am starting to see through Obama's choosing Geithner to head Treasury. Timmy is a willing and pliant point man on this power grab that guarantees the ultimate destruction of the greatest economy on earth. How is this for a trip down nightmare alley? First off, the honorable and brilliant Joe Biden just at-

tended a conference in a seaside resort in Chile attended by South American and European heads of state. The leaders are attending the Progressive Governance Conference, billed as "a vital opportunity for the center left's leading international figures to put forward a future vision for progressive politics."

If that doesn't give you the willies, the G20 summit, currently in session in London, should. These geniuses, among which is our very own economic wizard, Obama, intend to solve the world's financial miseries. Good luck with that.

Well, actually, as I understand it, the representatives of the 20 largest economies are trying to unify financial regulations to keep the bottom from falling out. They were met with huge demonstrations by British discontents that object to the various bailouts and other measures taken so far that have proven to be valueless, or nearly so.

The potential blessing in all of this is the possibility of little or nothing being agreed upon during the gathering. The bothersome thing to me is the emphasis being placed on our conforming to the socialist European style that has proven a failing proposition.

All of this hoopla is obscuring the real disaster currently going on in Bonn, Germany. FOXNews.com's headline tells the story. "U.N. 'Climate Change' Plan Would Likely Shift Trillions to Form New World

• See SWANSON page 8

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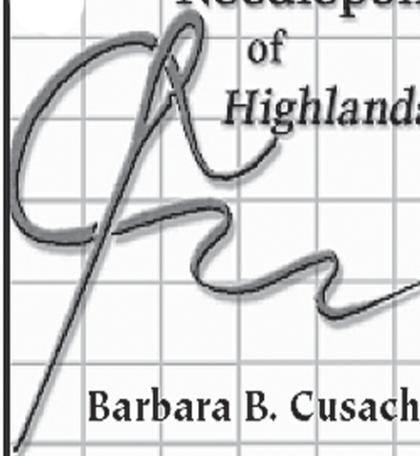
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• REFLECTIONS FROM TURTLE POND •

The wacky Liberal abroad

Last week I wrote about some of my "wacky" liberal ideas, and mostly talked about domestic issues. I thought

this week I'd discuss foreign policy. It seems to me that conservatives believe in American exceptionalism and want

to preserve American preeminence for the rest of time. For example, many of the neo-conservatives who had influence over foreign policy in the last eight years were signatories to a manifesto entitled "Project for a New American Century."

Conservatives also think America always has and always will only do the right thing.

Liberals on the other hand think America should take her place in the community of nations. America is a very special country due to our Constitution and freedoms, but this doesn't mean that we can't learn from other countries, or that we need to dominate the world. Liberals are also willing to admit that America has made mistakes and done bad things in the past.

For example, I was astonished in 2004 when John Kerry, a Vietnam veteran, ran against George W. Bush for president. I thought the Vietnam war was over; that we had all agreed that America had made a mistake in fighting that war and we had learned from that lesson. In 2004 I learned that conservatives don't agree with that; in their mind the only mistake was not fighting harder and winning.

Just this last week Secretary of State Clinton said on the way to Mexico that the U.S. was responsible for some of the violence in Mexico, both because of our demand for drugs and the easy availability of weapons streaming south. It sounded to me like she just stated the obvious, but she was lambasted by conservatives for the "typical liberal blame-America-first" attitude.

For the last few decades the United States has forced other countries to adopt our free-market economic policies, and as a result the entire world has gone down the tubes with us financially this year. Some foreign leaders are now calling for a different global economic model, recommending the world move away from the U.S. system. (See this week's column by Paul Krugman, "America the Tarnished")

I've written before about the trip I took to the Soviet Union in 1979. I wanted to see our "enemy" up close and personal. I could speak Russian and in the six weeks I was in the country I talked to many people. Every single person was astonished to find that in America we thought the Soviets wanted war with us. They had been convinced by their government that we wanted war with them. From that time forward I have thought the best foreign policy would be to send young people abroad. By making



Katie Brugger
k-brugger@hotmail.com

contact with ordinary people in other countries we learn of our common humanity, and see we have much more in common than we have differences.

Thus I was thrilled to see Obama's recent video message to Iran. Obama was speaking to the people of Iran much more than to its leaders. He said: we honor your country, your history, your culture, your achieve-

ments. I greet you on *your* holiday. We do not hate you.

This was a subtle message to the people that it is their leadership that is the problem, not Iran itself.

Poetry is a highly revered art in the Islamic world, unlike in our culture, and thus it was meaningful to Iranians for Obama to quote a Persian poet: "But let us remember the words that were written by the poet Saadi, so many years ago: 'The children of Adam are limbs to each other, having been created of one essence.' With the coming of a new season, we're reminded of this precious humanity that we all share."

Of course this video has been criticized as naïve and "proven" to be ineffective because it did not achieve any "results" from Iran's leaders. But that was not its purpose.

Iran is a good example of the United States refusing to admit that we have ever done anything wrong. I encourage you to read "All the Shah's Men," by Stephen Kinzer (955.05K) to learn about American misdeeds in Iran. At the urging of the British, during Eisenhower's administration the CIA overthrew the democratically elected Prime Minister, Mohammed Mossadegh, because he was going to nationalize the oil industry, which was controlled by the British. In Mossadegh's place we installed the Shah and spent the next 25 years helping him terrorize his own people.

Liberals are convinced that excessive militarization is a grave mistake. In the last 30 years in the effort to project American strength and perpetuate our primacy, we have over-extended ourselves militarily. Currently, the U.S. has more than 700 military bases in 150 countries. (There are only 194 countries in the world!) Chalmers Johnson wrote a book called "Sorrrows of Empire" which warns that we are in danger of losing our republic. He claims we are becoming a new kind of empire, not one that seeks to establish colonies, but one seeking total military domination of the planet.

•See BRUGGER page 11

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... SWANSON continued from page 7

Economy."

Without going into the bloody details, this is the first of three UN organized meetings that will culminate in the agreement and signing of the Copenhagen Accord in December, 2009. The accord is the successor to the Kyoto Treaty that our Senate essentially failed to ratify by a vote of 0-95 in 1997. A year later, VP Al Gore symbolically signed the protocol, which meant nothing, but elevated him to nut-in-charge of sym-

bolic opposition to progress and wealth creation.

Now that the libs have their ducks in a row, it is likely that we will become a party to the "shift of trillions to form the new world economy." Those would be our trillions being distributed to the undeveloped nations of the world.

McCain wouldn't look so bad right now. We had a choice.

• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

'All Tore Up'



Chaplain Margaret Howell
Holy Family Lutheran Church - ELCA

Carlos Mencia is one of my favorite comedians. A U.S. citizen of Honduran descent, He is almost painfully honest in his observations about America as opposed to the rest of the world.

On a recent show, he said that he was sick of people whining about being poor in America. Most people in America don't know what real poverty is. They think that living in a small apartment and driving a 1988 Buick is poverty. He says that even homeless people, if they ask, will be given something to eat and a place to sleep in America, and he is mostly right.

Carlos cites the plight of many people in the world who have less than nothing. Countries where war and greed and miss-use of power are literally killing their own people make us all look like kings.

We're not poor in this country, not in the sense of the grinding poverty of many parts of the world, even if we are in an economic downturn, or even a depression.

But most of us are feeling very betrayed right now. Greedy CEOs are walking away scot-free with millions stashed somewhere in a Swiss bank account. Giant corporations who make millions and even billions in profits are getting OUR tax dollars to bail them out because they didn't have the common sense to change with the times, or even worse, when they deliberately and knowingly built a house of cards that was doomed to fail.

Most of us have lost much of our investments that were supposed to support us in retirement. Many people are losing jobs and that number is growing exponentially. Yet, it seems that the real criminals are walking away without a scratch.

Comedian Wand Sikes put it best. "Isn't America's a wonderful country? Where else do the poor bail out the rich?"

There's big lesson in all this for us. Placing trust in the "the system" has failed us.

America is getting a major attitude adjustment right now. But, that is not necessarily a bad thing!

Have you noticed that you are hearing more hopeful stories on the news lately? Amid the bad news about Wall Street, are stories of hope and kindness and love that grab our attention. I think that it is an indication that we are rearranging what we deem important in our lives. And, instead of making us fearful, it can make us better.

Now, we probably don't want to live as aesthetic a lifestyle as John the Baptist did, but he makes his point, which is to call attention to Jesus.

It is human nature, that when things are good, often God takes a back seat in our lives. We are motoring along and life is great and all is right with the world. We are so proud of ourselves that we don't bother with God.

Boom-Crash-Crunch! We get "All tore up!"

Now what? God comes to us through the torn places in our lives. He comes to us when tragedy strikes us. He comes to us when illness weakens us. He comes to us when old age ravages us. He comes to us when those we love pass away. He

•See SPIRITUALLY page 10

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Monday: Evening Bible Study at 6 p.m.

Wednesday: Men's Bible study at 8 a.m.

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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.

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Pastor Gary Hewins

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Worship; 6pm High School Group

Tuesdays: 10am Women's Bible Study; 2nd, 4th, & 5th

Tuesdays Young Mom's Bible Study

Wed.: 5pm Dinner; 6pm AWANA, Youth Activities

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The Rev. Brian Sullivan - Rector: 526-2968

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Monday: 4 p.m. Women's Cursillo Group

Tuesday: 8 a.m. Men's Cursillo Group

4:30 PM. Education for Ministry

Wednesday: 6:30 PM. Choir Practice

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

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a.m.; Youth - 6:30 p.m.; Choir - 7:15

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Prayer - 6:15 p.m., Choir - 7:30 p.m.

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Dr. Lee Bowman, Pastor

Dr. Don Mullen, Parish Associate 526-3175

Sun.: Worship - 10:55 a.m.; Sun. School - 9:30 & 9:45.

Mondays: 8 a.m. - Men's Bible Discussion & Breakfast

Tuesdays: 10 a.m. - Seekers

Wednesdays - Choir - 7

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Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg. - 7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Alfred Sizemore

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Evening Worship - 6 p.m.

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

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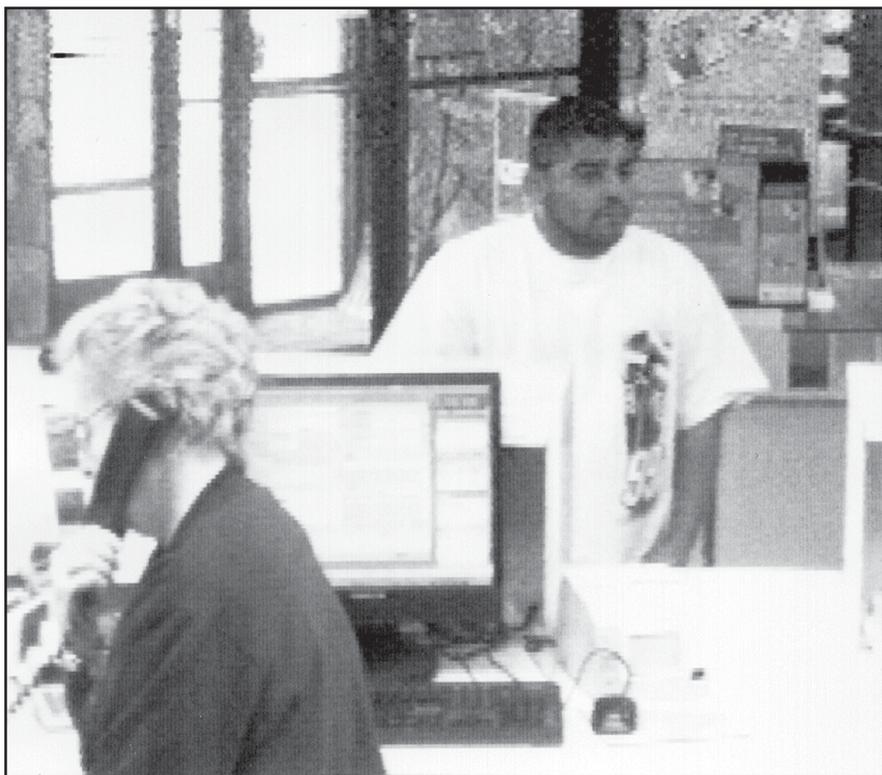
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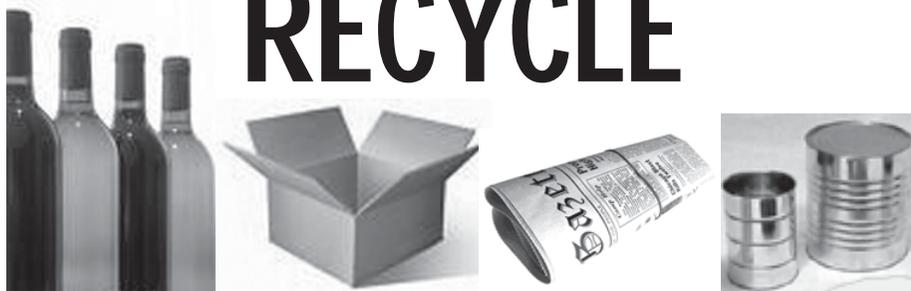
Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 11

Do you know this man?



Detective Todd Ensley is asking anyone who can identify the man in this picture, to call the Highlands Police Department. The unidentified man at the counter of RBC Centura Bank tried to cash a stolen and forged check on Thursday, March 12 between 4-4:30 p.m. The photo was taken from RBC Centura's video camera.

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• FROM MY PERSPECTIVE •

Why electric rates are increasing

Soon there will be an increase in our electric rates. About six months ago the provider of our electricity, Duke Power, informed us that there would be an increase beginning in March of 2010. At that time they could not tell us how much but indicated it would be in the 5% range. Since we had not had an increase in over almost 14 years, we have been expecting this for some time. We felt for several years that we were falling under their radar. We were not!

Some months ago they once again came to us proposing a much larger increase than we had expected. Beginning in March 2010 the rate would increase 16% a year for the next three years. These were projected rates and would be based on projections for customer demands, actual monthly customer energy usage and projections for the annual energy rate.

Because of these large increases we sought both legal and expert consultation on what course we should take. Kevin O'Donnell with Nova Energy Consultants has worked with a number of other towns through this process, and, after consultation with him, he attended our board meeting as we discussed our options. Duke has told us these new rates are not negotiable.

One of the questions was whether to stay with Duke Power or seek another provider. After these consultations, the advice was to remain with Duke Power because these rates were in line with other areas. Those towns who have left Duke have tried to return with some difficulty.

To soften an immediate large rise in rates next March, we were advised to raise our rates very soon by 10%. During our next fiscal year (July to July, '09-'10) there will not be another elevation of rates, but thereafter it would be 4% a year. These rate increases were used utilizing what is called a rate stabilization fund.

The board did not act immediately on this at our Special board meeting this past week. If approved later, the new 10% increase will take effect either in April or May of this year. It is unfortunate that we must do this in the midst of an economic downturn, but we have no choice since the Duke Power rate increases are out of our control. I might add once again that the rates from Duke have not increased for the past 14 years. We have been fortunate to have low rates over that period of time.

On another topic, the Board of Education acted responsibly recently by excluding certain students who live just across the state line in Georgia, primarily Satolah, from paying tuition. I had made a request to both the Chairman of the Board of County



Mayor Don Mullen

Commissioners and the Board of Education that they review this situation. As they should be, the guidelines for this exclusion are rigid and only affect a small number of students whose families have close ties with Highlands, work in Highlands, and own property taxes in Highlands. They are admitted under the discretionary admission policy on a space available basis. This was a good decision by the board and I

applaud them for caring for students and their families with close ties to Highlands although they may live across the state line in Georgia.

It appears the Harris Lake Sewer project is back on schedule with the addition of more crews for the work to be done. My concern has been for the commercial areas on Main Street and Fifth Street and I am assured these two roads will be completed by the middle of April before the summer people come back. It has been an inconvenience for those business establishments and affected their bottom line, particularly during the Christmas season. Hopefully, soon that will be all behind us. Some inconvenience will remain on the residential roads but that should not take long. I thank everyone for their patience while this much needed project has been going on.

... SPIRITUALLY continued from page 9

comes to us when all we have worked for is gone.

It is wonderful that folks in desperate circumstances "find God." But what is really awesome is when we realize, that because of Jesus, God was there with us all along! We didn't find Him — he found us!

God isn't just a divine EMT that pulls us out of the fire when things go wrong, but He is always there, always loving us, from the moment we were a spark until our embers finally fade away.

We may all have hard times ahead. We may return to the ways our grandparents and great-grandparents did things in the last great economic downturn. If you read accounts of the Great Depression, one of the things that stand out is the generosity of people who had next to nothing, but gave it anyway. Times were hard, but people got fed. We looked after our neighbor and they did the same.

We came out of the great upheaval a better, stronger and more faithful people. Economies fluctuate, governments rise and fall, but the love of God in Jesus Christ is constant.

No matter what befalls us, we are children of God and in being so, are blessed.

Macon County cancer stats disclosed at meeting

They say a good meal is the way to a man's heart, so when it comes to cancer, Macon County health officials are hoping the "woman of the house" will intervene where her man is concerned.

At the March 23 Macon County Commission meeting, Health Department Jim Bruckner announced a new health screening program targeted at women called "Ladies Night Out."

Through a state-funded program, all women in Macon County would be eligible for breast, colon, cervical and cardiovascular screenings.

"If the screenings turn up something, with money for treatment often the problem, we can also help them get funds for that," said Bruckner. "Through the program, we're hoping the women will go home and convince their men to get the appropriate screenings, particularly for colon cancer."

He announced a new vaccine, to be available soon, that will prevent those diagnosed and treated for colon cancer to experience a reoccurrence.

Macon County has a higher incidence of colon cancer than both Western North Carolina and North Carolina as a whole and out of the top five cancer death causes in Macon County it's number two.

From 2001-2005, 48 Maconians died from colon cancer – 25 males and 23 females.

Macon County Commission Chairman Ronnie Beale said several people in his age group, have gone to funerals of several friends in his age group, who died of colon cancer and asked if the high incidence was due to the traditional diet of many in the mountains of Western North Carolina.

"I mean if it moved, we'd fry it," he said.

Bruckner said lifestyle has a lot to do with the incidence of cancer and the sad part about colon cancer is that death from it is 90% preventable because with early detection the slow-growing cancer can be eliminated.

"The more people we get to have the test, the more the fatality numbers and incidence numbers will go down," he said.

Commissioner Jim Davis said he was scared to death of having a colonoscopy but finally had one when he turned 60-years-old and he said there was nothing to it and recommended everyone over the age of 50 get the test and be done with it. Retests are suggested every 10 years.

Lung cancer is the number one killer in Macon County with 126 people — 72 men and 54 women dying of it from 2001-2005.

The good news is lung cancer incidences are declining as more and more people give up smoking.

According to the NC Central Cancer

Registry June 2008 data, the incidence rate for lung cancer in Macon County is 60% of 100,000 people versus 69.5% in Western North Carolina and 73.8 percent in North Carolina.

Mortality per 100,000 is 51.5% for Macon County, 55.7% for Western North Carolina and 59.7% for North Carolina.

The third top cause of cancer in Macon County is breast cancer – 33 women died from 2001-2005 of the disease; prostate cancer is number four with 28 deaths and pancreatic cancer is number five with 27 deaths – 14 men and 13 women.

Happily, the incidence of cancer in Macon County dropped considerably from 2004 to 2005 when compared with North Carolina as a whole, but the mortality rate was about the same at a little under 200 deaths per 100,000 people.

Health officials say Macon County's fight against smoking will continue to help citing smoke-free restaurants and public

buildings a big step in the right direction.

Still, compared to the rest of the population in North Carolina, 2006 figures show 4.9% fewer WNC residents have ever had a colonoscopy/sigmoidoscopy than the rest of NC; 6.1% fewer females 21+ years old have had a pap smear in the past three years; 4.2% fewer WNC females 40+ years old have had a mammogram in the past two years but, 2.9% more WNC men have had a PSA test when compared to NC in general.

Health officials urged members of the commission to set an example and have all the available cancer detection tests to demonstrate what should and can be done to prevent cancer.

Beale said as more and more people lose their health insurance, Macon County Health Department services, such as cancer screenings, are going to become more and more important.

— Kim Lewicki

... BRUGGER continued from page 8

I suggest another book, Paul Kennedy's classic "The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers" (unfortunately no longer available at the Hudson Library) to put this discussion of military over-reach in context. Kennedy identifies two factors that are major contributors to the decline of a great power: financialization of the economy and the attempt to dominate the world through military might.

Financialization means we have stopped making things and instead are making money from money. We are seeing the results of that today in our wrecked economy.

We are also seeing the effects of militarization. George W. Bush doubled the federal debt during his two terms and a lot of that money went to a completely unnecessary war in Iraq. We got a lot of fancy military technology but our domestic economy was shredded. In the end, Kennedy documents how a great power becomes a paper tiger — it looks tough on the outside but is empty inside.

Last, a liberal is in favor of total nuclear disarmament. A little-known fact is that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the international agreement we use to pressure Iran and North Korea to refrain from building a nuclear weapon, calls for the countries that possess nuclear weapons — that includes us — to get rid of them. (See my article "A Non-Nuclear World," June 2007).

How much more effective would be our pressure on Iran and North Korea if we were living up to our part of the agreement?

• All of Katie Brugger's columns are available at www.kathleenbrugger.com.



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... TDC continued from page 1

this extra layer of county intervention will mean the county's administration fees will increase, thereby decreasing the amount of room tax money returned to the two TDCs – the Highlands TDC and the Franklin/Nantahala TDC.

Every lodging business in Macon County charges a 3% room tax which is sent to the county and then disbursed to the respective Visitor Center/Chambers of Commerce in Highlands and Franklin. By law the money can only be spent on the promotion of travel and tourism in the county.

"The county wants the Visitor Center and the Chamber of Commerce to be transparent, which it should be – they want to know how the chamber of commerce and visitor center share the money — but we want as much room tax money sent back to Highlands as possible," said Jerry Moore, secretary and owner of Kilwin's. "We need it!"

Commissioner McClellan agreed. "I

want the maximum money used for its intended purpose and a minimum amount of money spent on administration," he said.

At Tuesday's meeting, the Highlands TDC agreed to propose a change to Horton's proposal during an upcoming meeting with representatives of the Franklin/Nantahala TDC, Horton and County Attorney Lesley Moxley.

Under the Highlands TDC's proposal, the TDC's designee – probably Visitor Center Director Jan VanHook – will send copies of invoices paid and copies of the checks used to pay the invoices to the county finance department once a month.

If a misappropriation of funds is discovered by the finance department, the amount will be deducted from the next room tax disbursement – in fact, withheld until the entire misappropriated amount is paid back.

The TDC said there already is a checks and balance operation in place to ensure the

proper use of the room tax money which by state law can only be used for the promotion of travel and tourism in Macon County.

They said the 11-member Chamber of Commerce Board looks at all the transactions and the treasurer personally signs the checks for invoices.

But that seems to be where the confusion lies. Horton said the county isn't too concerned about how the visitor centers spend the room tax money, because the visitor centers' sole purpose is to promote travel and tourism. What concerns the county is how much of the room tax money the chambers of commerce use and what it's used for.

Since the visitor centers and the chambers share support services — a building, operational expenses, some marketing plans, personnel and other things — there needs to be two separate accounts for the disbursement of the room tax money, said Horton, one for the visitor center and one for the chamber.

"We need to have a contract with the chambers so they can receive their portion and we need an exact accounting of how much of the room tax money they need per year which we can disburse to them monthly," he said. "For instance, if Kiltyka's salary is \$60,000 and the room tax money pays for 30% of that, we would send \$1,500 a month to the chamber for that disbursement. It's pretty straightforward and simple and would be handled that way for every shared service expense between the visitor center and chambers."

The TDCs also discussed the current administration fee of 15%.

Over the years the county's administration fee has changed several times. Initially, in 1986, the administration fee was 15%. That was decreased to 3% some years later and about four years ago was again increased to 15%.

About four years ago, under the management of Sam Greenwood, consultant Gary Nicholson was hired to determine which lodging establishments in Macon County were correctly collecting and turning in the required room tax money to the county each month.

To pay for Nicholson's fee, the room tax administration fee was increased from 3% to 15%. However, long after the work was completed and Nicholson paid, the county has continued to withhold 15% of the room tax proceeds for administrative purposes.

"Where is that money?" asked Sabrina Hawkins, member of the TDC who owns Highlands Inn and the Hampton Inn. "How was it spent and can we get any of that back? We need to ask those questions."

The administration fee at 15% for four years of county room tax comes to about \$228,000.

Annually, Highlands gets about \$240,000 a year in room tax money and Franklin gets about \$150,000.

The group also said it would like to require "reverse transparency" from the county.

"Can we require a line item accounting on how they spend the administration fee that is withheld each month?" asked Helene Siegel owner of 4 1/2 Street Inn. "A reverse transparency seems fair."

In a subsequent interview, Horton said the administration fees withheld from room tax disbursements go into the county's General Fund along with sales tax revenue and other tax proceeds so a line item wouldn't be available concerning that money.

Furthermore, the 15% administrative fee withheld over the last four years wouldn't be returned.

He said a revised administrative fee will go into effect the beginning of the next fiscal year, July 1, 2009, and will likely be less than the 15% and will likely be a fixed dollar amount rather than a percentage.

Horton hired a consultant to determine the direct and indirect costs of administering the room tax money and based on his report will determine the new administration fee. He hopes to have that information available at the next county commission meeting, on April 13.

TDC members said that may be better because once set, the administration fee shouldn't fluctuate like the current percentage amount.

– **Kim Lewicki**

First Presbyterian Church of Highlands Holy Week 2009

Sunday, April 5, 2009
10:55 a.m.

"Passion Palm Sunday Communion Service"
Sermon by Rev. Dr. Lee Bowman

Thursday, April 9, 2009
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.

Friday, April 10, 2009
12:00 noon

"Stations of the Cross"

Sponsored by the churches of Highlands. Meet at Our Lady of the Mountain Catholic Church

Sunday, April 12, 2009

6:45 a.m.

"Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service"

Sponsored by the churches of Highlands.

Service held at the Highlands' Biological Center Amphitheater.

10:55 a.m.

"Easter Sunday Service"

Sermon by

Rev. Dr. Lee Bowman
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9:00 a.m. Sunday Church School at the Peggy Crosby Center

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Rev. Dr. Lee Bowman, Pastor

Rev. Dr. Don Mullen, Parish Associate

... START DATE continued from page 3

"I don't believe the earlier date, a month-and-a-half earlier, is a better or a worse thing for Highlands School," said Principal Brian Jetter. "From what we've identified from the pre-schools, our new Kindergarten class next fall will be the same size (or a little larger) than this year's Kindergarten class. I think we had about 32 students this year, and we'll have 32 or more next year. So, for us, it is no impact at this time. Next year's Great Beginning and Kindergarten class look like they'll be as full as ever."

Kindergarten registration for Highlands School is April 16 beginning at 10 a.m. to noon. Parents are asked to be at the school at 10 a.m. when they will meet Principal Brian Jetter and other faculty and administration members. While there, school buses will go to the three Pre-Ks in town and pick up rising Kindergarteners and deliver them to school around 10:45 a.m.

With their parents students will tour the school, their classrooms and meet their teachers followed by lunch with their parents in the cafeteria.

After lunch, the children will be bussed back to their Pre-K schools while parents complete the Kindergarten registration process.

All the necessary registration forms have been mailed to parents of rising Kindergarteners and they must be completed and returned on April 16.

Parents who need a registration packet can call 526-2147 or stop by Highlands School.

Also needed is a Health Assessment form, social security card, certified birth certificate, proof of residency, and any legal documents necessary if you are not the biological parent of the child enrolling.

– **Kim Lewicki**

... ELECTRIC continued from page 1

lish a rate stabilization fund.

The federal government is requiring all municipalities to get 1% of their power from renewable sources. Since the town is under the Duke Energy umbrella, it makes sense to ask Duke to handle the renewable aspect.

A rate stabilization fund will offset potential increases and other costs above Duke's "estimated" 16% hike, should they occur. It will also enable future boards to deal with future increases without drastically impacting users.

Duke has a "True Up" policy which means there is a projected revenue or expenditure and an actual revenue or expenditure. If Duke's True Up expenditure figure is more than projected, it can bill the town the difference and demand payment within 30 days.

"By implementing a rate increase now, we can begin building a rate stabilization fund by \$25,000-\$30,000 a month so we can be prepared for those kinds of events," said Town Manager Jim Fatland. As part of its recent commitment to work with the county and Town of Franklin, Highlands Town Board agreed to help fund a full-time Economic Development Consultant for the county.

MC Economic Development

Commissioner and Economic Board member Hank Ross said the county is asking both Highlands and Franklin to help fund one-third of a Economic Development Commission (EDC) consultant's salary which the county commission has approved to hire for \$40,000. The Franklin Town Board agreed to fund \$7,000, the MC Commission is funding two-thirds of the salary, which leaves the balance of \$7,000 to be funded by Highlands.

On the recommendation of Fatland and Ross, the board unanimously agreed to a one-time commitment of \$7,000 to help fund the position contingent upon a meeting with County Manager Jack Horton to discuss the potential benefits to Highlands.

Basically, the consultant will be developing a business plan for the county to include Highlands and Franklin. He will be interviewing economic stakeholders, EDC members, county commissioners, legislators and town officials from Highlands and Franklin.

A comprehensive marketing plan will be devised and relationships will be built with economic development partners and companies to both introduce them to Macon County and entice them to relocate or expand here.

All along the way, detailed analysis reports will be submitted to showcase contacts, projects, jobs created, capital invested and the overall economic impact on the county.

"I feel this is a good move," said Ross. "We need an EDC that is proactive and looks at the future of the county and what it needs."

Fire Dept. Budget

The annual Highlands Fire & Rescue budget for 2009-2010 was presented. It's substantially higher than last year because the department needs a hook and ladder truck and it would like to expand one part-time

position to a full-time position..

To pay for the vehicle, the department requested an increase in the fire tax from .008 to .009. Based on the property valuations at \$3,834,000,000, \$345,060 in fire tax would be collected. The department has a 97% collection rate.

The money will be used for expansion of a vehicle bay area to accommodate the truck - estimated at \$150,000 - and \$200,000 will go toward the cost of the truck. There is also talk of finding a place on the plateau for a substation which could both house the new truck and make it easier for the department to service areas further out in the fire district.

Bob Houston, administrative assistant at the department, said the department could use a hook and ladder to get to "hard to reach" places like the top of Oak Square, the area of the Old Edwards Inn and Madison's between Church and Main streets and the upcoming condominium complex on U.S. 64 east.

The board unanimously approved the budget.

Community Building

January 2007, the town turned over the operation of the Highlands Conference Center (now called the Highlands Community Building) to the Highlands Rotary Club which subsequently rented out the space. Since the Town Board is now using the building to hold meetings, and since the recreation staff currently schedules the use of the Community Building anyway, Fatland suggested the building be put under the supervision of the town's Rec Department.

Consequently, the town is giving the Highlands Rotary Club a 60-day notice terminating its lease agreement with the town which will assume operations on July 1, 2009. All three long-term renters -- the Highlands Rotary, Highlands MountainTop Rotary and the Christ Anglican Church will be meeting with Fatland to discuss leasing options.

Fatland said he could be a profitable arrangement for the town but said rental fees probably won't change.

White Squirrel Research Grant

Finally, the board heard a request from the Hillrie Quin to help fund a project to track 12 white squirrels which would be transplanted from the Brevard area. He said white squirrels are the number one tourist attraction in Brevard and suggested it would be a good thing of Highlands, too. He suggested releasing them on the Greenway behind the Rec Park and using some of the money in the Greenway fund to pay for the project.

The total cost of the project is \$14,500 with \$2,500 each to be funded by the Brevard Institute and the Highlands Biological Station (both in-kind services) with the Town of Highlands supplying \$9,500.

(Not really...the White Squirrel Research Grant request was an April Fool's joke initiated by Fatland. "I'm glad it was an April Fool's joke because I really didn't want to vote on that," said Commissioner Buz Dotson.)

- Kim Lewicki

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Holy Week Services at Highlands United Methodist Church

315 Main Street / 828-526-3376

Pastor Paul Christy

Sunday, April 5 - Palm Sunday

Please join us at 11 a.m. for worship which will begin with a palm processional by the children.

Thursday, April 9 - Maundy Thursday

Please join us at 7 p.m. for our Maundy Thursday service. We will share together in Holy Communion.

Friday, April 10 - Good Friday

Please join us at 7 p.m. for our Good Friday service.

Sunday, April 12 - Easter Sunday

6:45 a.m. - Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service

Join us and other churches at the amphitheatre behind the Biological Research Center at 6:45 a.m. for our Sunrise Service.

8:30 and 11:00 a.m. - Worship Services / The Living Cross

Join us as we celebrate at 8:30 and 11 a.m. Bring a flower from your yard or something purchased to place on the cross before each service.

9:45 a.m. - Covered Dish Breakfast

Bring an egg casserole, quiche, fruit salad, or coffee cake/danish/muffins to share as we have breakfast together.

10 a.m. - Children's Easter Egg Hunt and Storytime

The children will be off to hunt eggs at 10 a.m., immediately after breakfast.

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... NEW ROLE continued from page 1

cient Operations.

"With the help of facilitators we will implement focused, sequential and sustained professional development opportunities for targeted improvement," said Brigman.

He said Macon County Schools are doing well, "But we can always do better. We've seen tremendous results at the middle school level but we need 100% of our students meet-

•See NEW ROLE page 23

• COACH'S CORNER •

Calipari to Kentucky could cause major repercussions.

While most college basketball fans are concentrating on the Final Four this weekend, there is a certain rabid fanbase in Kentucky that is also celebrating this weekend, despite not even making the NCAA Tournament. On Tuesday, Kentucky hired Memphis coach John Calipari to replace the fired Billy Gillespie and bring success back to a Kentucky program that had failed to live up to the ridiculous expectations set within the last two years. While on the surface, this looks like a great hire for the Wildcats in that they get a guy with 4 straight 30 win seasons and a Final Four during that time period-this hire could also turn into a major moment in college hoops history.

The reason that Calipari's hire is sending shock waves through underground college basketball circles is due to the status of Memphis's top 5 recruiting class that was set to join Calipari in the home of Elvis. Now that Calipari has left the building in Memphis, his recruits will likely want to join him at Kentucky. The only problem with that is not only do Calipari's recruits want to join him, some of his current players at Memphis, including sharpshooter Robert Sallie have requested to follow Calipari to Kentucky.

Add these players, as well as freshmen who have committed to Kentucky to play for Gillespie and the current Kentucky roster and you have a total of 20 players for only 12 scholarships.

The real question now is what Calipari will do with the players that he doesn't want playing for him at UK. His press conference didn't sound promising to current UK players, as Calipari stated that he would "sit down and have an honest conversation with each player about whether they can play in his offense."

If I were a recruit currently slated to come to Kentucky, or a current player, I would be concerned about my status as a Wildcat after hearing that kind of quote from my new coach.

The ramifications of this are many. What if Calipari drops the majority of the current Wildcat roster to bring in his guys -- essentially creating a fantasy team of the best players from Kentucky and Memphis, along with the top



Ryan Potts
tryanpotts@hotmail.com

freshman recruits from both schools? Not only would Kentucky be an immediate national title contender, but they would also be the primary destination for every "one and done" player that is forced to make a stop in college before taking their game to the NBA.

Additionally, how will Kentucky's academic reputation hold up if Calipari and his 0% graduation rate continue to bring in mercenary basketball players who care nothing about education? Under Calipari, Memphis has not been known as a bastion of academic prowess, not to mention the numerous arrests and the hiring of "handlers" for these mercenary basketball players under the guise of "director of strength and conditioning" and the like.

While the majority of these questions stem from part of a worst-case scenario, there is no doubt that Kentucky's basketball program will be under intense scrutiny during the coming years. The NCAA will likely have Calipari under the microscope during his early tenure, but the lasting effects of Calipari's merger with Kentucky could come back to haunt both the University of Kentucky, as well as college basketball for years to come.

... Q & A continued from page 6

6. As Highlands grows theoretically there are more citizens and more electric utility customers, so logically it should follow that Highlands could charge less to see the same "return?"

Highlands has enjoyed the benefit of additional customers which has enabled the Town to 1) not raise electric rates 2) address rising operational costs and 3) maintain same 5% rate of return for its Capital Reserves.

7. Why is it so important for a Town like Highlands' size to have a healthy fund balance?

As mentioned earlier, a healthy fund balance provides the following advantages:

- In a year with declining revenue, the

•See Q & A page 15

H-C Hospital Hospice to host webcast of 'Annual Living with Grief' teleconference

Highlands-Cashiers Hospice will play host on April 29 to area residents who wish to view the 16th Annual National Bereavement Teleconference by webcast. The topic of this year's event, sponsored by the Hospice Foundation of America (HFA), is "Diversity and End-of-Life Care."

The teleconference will examine how diversity influences end-of-life decision making and the impact that culture has at the time of death and during bereavement. One of the goals of the teleconference is to increase sensitivity by helping professionals acknowledge how their own cultural values and assumptions influence the delivery of care. Between 125,000 and 150,000 people in more than 2,000 communities across the nation are expected to view or participate in the event via either satellite feed or webcast

At Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, the webcast will be projected onto a large screen so it can be viewed by the group. While local attendees won't be able to ask questions or comment interactively, there will be an opportunity for discussion within the group. The webcast will be viewed in Suite

103 of the Jane Woodruff Clinic on the Hospital campus. It begins at 1:15 p.m. and is expected to last until 4:30 p.m. Local Hospice staff and volunteers, as well as area ministers and counselors, are being invited to attend, but the program is also open to the general public. There is no charge for the event, but reservations are encouraged because seating is limited.

Noted authorities participating in the panel discussion are Samira K. Beckwith, president and CEO of Hope Hospice and Community Services; Sandy Chen Stokes, executive director of the Chinese American Coalition for Compassionate Care; Kenneth J. Doka, professor of Gerontology at the Graduate School of the College of New Rochelle; Wanda H. Jenkins, bereavement services manager, Vitas; Richard Payne, director of the Institute on Care at the End of Life at Duke University; Paul Rosenblatt, professor at the College of Education & Human Development at the University of Minnesota; and Rev. Carlos Sandoval-Cros, of St. Simon's Episcopal Church, and a psychiatrist in private practice at St. Simon's Island, GA. The panel of

these distinguished ethicists, educators and hospice experts will be moderated by Frank Sesno, professor of Media and Public Affairs at The George Washington University and special correspondent with CNN.

For more than a decade, this annual educational program has been instrumental in educating health care professionals and families on issues affecting end-of-life care. The program provides an opportunity for a wide variety of professionals – including doctors, nurses, funeral directors, psychologists, educators, social workers and bereavement counselors – to share and exchange ideas and obtain continuing education credits. The teleconference is produced by Hospice Foundation of America, a not-for-profit organization, which acts as an advocate for the hospice concept of care through ongoing programs of professional education, public information and research on issues relating to illness, loss, grief and bereavement.

For more information or to make a reservation, call Monica Crook at Highlands-Cashiers Hospice at (828) 526-1402.

... Q & A continued from page 14

Town Board could appropriate fund balance for capital projects and capital equipment in lieu of borrowing

- Ensures good credit rating for future borrowings, if so desired
- To meet emergency situations or other unforeseen events that were not known at the time the budget was adopted
- To draw upon fund balance for grant opportunities that may require local match

8. What does Highlands actually pay per Kilowatt/hour wholesale?

Approximately \$40 per MWH.

9. What do Duke retail customers pay for Kilowatt/hour? What does Highlands charge its residents per Kilowatt/hour now?

Compared to the 107 Utilities in North Carolina, the Town of Highlands is ranked as the 2nd lowest. Duke Energy is ranked the 5th lowest. The Town of Highlands average retail price is \$7.90 per kwh while Duke's average retail price is \$8.19.



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• UPCOMING EVENTS •

On-going Events

• The Town of Highlands is accepting applications from non profits requesting funds. Applications may be obtained at Town Hall or on the Town's website www.highlandshnc.org under heading "forms and applications." To be eligible, an organization must be an IRS approved 501(c) (3). Applications should be submitted to the Town Clerk no later than April 1, 2009.

• The Bascom is offering a host of art classes for preschoolers to pre-teens from now through the end of the school year. For more information, call (828) 526-4949, ext. 0#.

• Friends of Panthertown work days, last Thursday of every month (time and location varies). Volunteers needed to maintain trails. For more information, contact Nina Elliott at 828-526-9938 (ext 258).

• Collections for men and women overseas at Chestnut Hill Retirement community. A wide variety of

items currently is needed, including books and magazines, CDs and DVDs, and small pocket books, which fit neatly in the BDUs (Battle Dress Uniforms). The drop point for all items will be under the flagpole at the Chestnut Hill Clubhouse on Clubhouse Trail. For any questions, or to schedule a drop-off call (828) 787-2114.

• Refuge Youth meets every Sun. night at 6:30 p.m. downstairs at Cullasaja Assembly of God. If you are in grades 6th-12th then this is the place to be! The church is located at 6201 Highlands Rd. next to Exxon. For more info call youth ministers Matt and Candace Woodroof at 828-369-7540 ext 203.

• Raffle of handcrafted Stiefel Botanical Book to Benefit The Bascom. To purchase a raffle ticket, call 526-4949, ext. 8#.

• Yoga at the Rec Park, 7:30 a.m Monday and Wednesdays. Call 526-4340 for information.

• Yoga in the bottom floor of Jane Woodruff Build-

ing. 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.

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

• "The Circle of Life" support group continues at the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital at the Jane Woodruff room 201, 10 a.m. until noon. Call Barbara Buchanan at 526-1402 or Florence Flanagan at 743-2567.

Mon. & Wed.

• Pilates Classes Level 1 of Jane Woodruff at the hospital at 4 p.m. \$10 per class. Call 526-5852.

• Middle School students After School Program from 3-5 p.m. at the Rec Park. For more information please call 828.526.3556.

Mon., Wed., Fri.

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

Wed., & Fri.

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

First Mondays

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

Mondays

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

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

Tuesdays

• Highlands Rotary Club meets at noon at the Highlands Conference Center.

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

Wednesdays

• 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.

Thursdays

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

• Taize worship at 7 p.m. at the Lutheran Chapel of the Holy Family, 2152 Dillard Road. There is a simple supper of bread and soup at 6 p.m. Dress is casual, and all are welcome. Call Chaplain Margaret Howell for more information: 828-526-2905 or email her at Knytengale@aol.com

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

Earth Day is April 25 - A Little History

On April 22, 1970, thanks to progressive thinking politician Gaylord Nelson, Earth Day was officially established and is celebrated today across the nation and the world. Sen. Nelson caught the ear of Atty. General Robert Kennedy and eventually President Kennedy in 1963. By 1969, the idea had caught on and legislation passed in 1970 to create a "teach in" style day of recognition for environmental concerns.

The celebration was so wildly accepted by the populous it spilled over into other nations over time. Who would have thought that in 1970 not only did the environmental movement gain momentum, it has come to the forefront in 2009!

"Its strength grows each year because public knowledge and understanding grow each year," said Nelson in 1980.

Earth Day was created for that purpose and has been, even in the '80s when environmentalism seemed off the radar, remarkably and steadfastly teaching citizens the value of conservation of our resources. It has reshaped many people's lifestyle and philosophy affecting how we build, how we eat, and provide protection for life of all forms.

"So long as the human species inhabits the earth, proper management of its resources will be the most fundamental issue we face... We disregard the needs of our ecosystem at our mortal peril," said Nelson

Senator from Wisconsin saw the writing on the wall and took a scientific grassroots movement to the next level with Earth Day. Today, there are green ideas but many solutions are already here. This year exhibitors will have all the information needed to live a eco-friendly lifestyle in Jackson & Macon County.

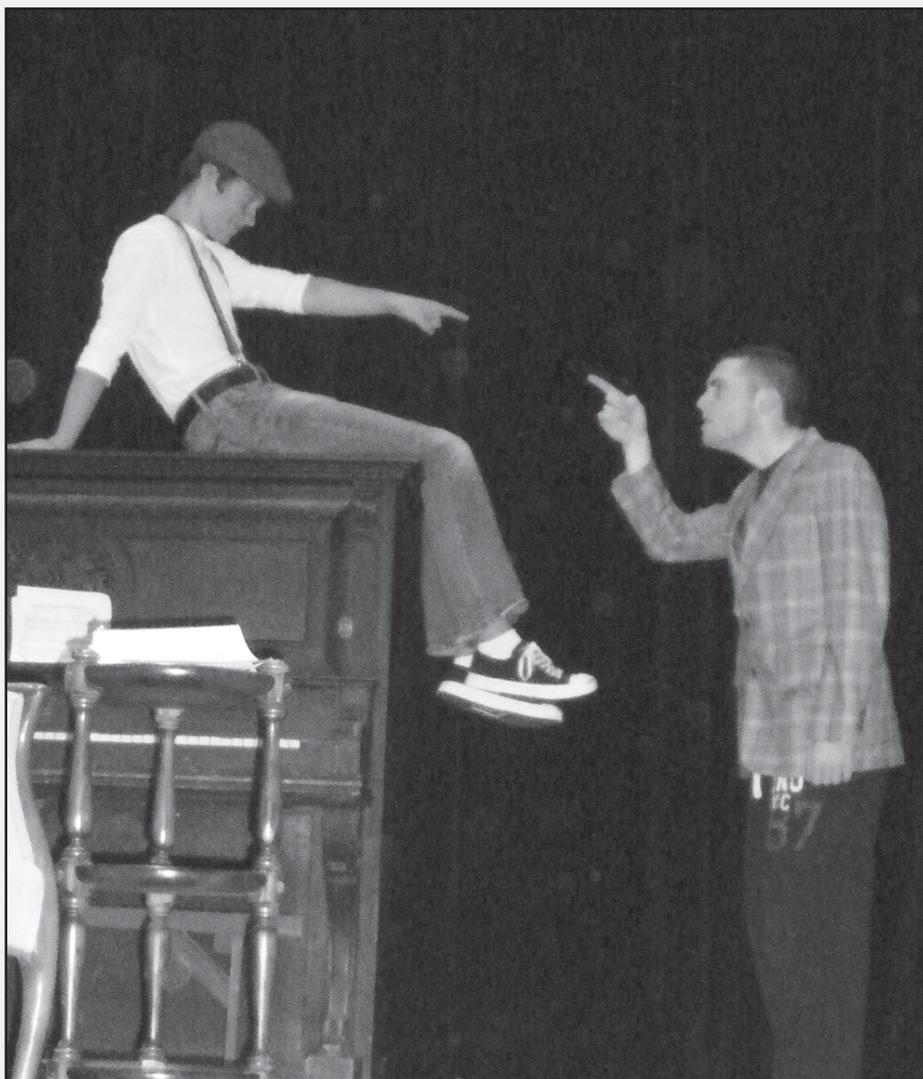
This free celebration is hosted by J-MCA, Highlands Cashiers Land Trust, UCWA, and Whole Life Foods.

Earth Day Fact: Join nations across the world and participate in Earth Hour Saturday, March 28 at 8:30 pm. People across the globe will turn off all their lights at this time to show support for energy conservation. For more info go to www.earthhourUS.org

From 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the Village Green in Cashiers there will be live music, games, children's Earth art, food, exhibits, massage, and a climbing wall

Sponsors are Koenig Builders, United Community Bank, Sillbark Builders, The Laurel Magazine, Highlands Cashiers Land Trust, Jackson-Macon Conservation Alliance, Upper Cullasaja Watershed Association, & Whole Life Foods.

Highlands School play 'Inner Willy' at PAC April 16-19



"The Inner Willy" is a coming of age story, that tells about the journey of a boy, with a little help from his mischievous conscience, maturing, learning to make his own decisions and becoming a young man. The play will be staged April 16-19 at the Martin-Lipscomb Performing Arts Center. Thursday through Saturday performances begin at 7:30 p.m., and a Sunday matinee starts at 2:30 p.m. For tickets call 526-9047. Pictured is Matt McClellan who plays Willoughby Adams and his Inner Willy who is played by Cai Roman.

• UPCOMING EVENTS •

524-9769 or Mary Ann Widenhouse 524-1355 for more information.

2nd & 4th Fridays

• Community Drum Circle at the Highlands Rec Park, from 6-7:30 p.m. Come experience a fun family friendly drum circle. All ages are encouraged to attend this free event. All experience levels welcomed. Celebrate community with facilitated interactive rhythmical dialogue. Bring your own drum or percussion instrument. Some extra drums and percussion will be supplied. For more information call 421-0551.

Fridays & Saturdays

• At Highlands Wine & Cheese, at Falls on Main, complimentary wine samplings during business hours.

Saturdays

• At Highlands Wine & Cheese, Falls on Main, Wine Flights from 4-6:30 p.m. Five wines, artisan cheeses and specialty foods. \$19 per person.

Thursday, April 2

• Bingo at the Community Building from 6:30-8:30. Sponsored by Highlands Rotary. Recipient of net proceeds will go to Boy Scout Troop 207 -- half of all money paid for Bingo cards goes to the players.

Saturday, April 4

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a 5-mile moderate hike to Rock Gorge and Big Bend Falls on the Chattooga River with a steep elevation change of 300 feet down and up the bluff above the river. Meet at the Bank of America in Highlands at 9:30 a.m. and at the Wachovia Bank in Cashiers at 9:50 a.m. Drive 50 miles round trip. Bring water, lunch, and wear sturdy

shoes. Call leader Virginia Talbot, 526-4904, for reservations. Visitors are welcome, but no pets please.

Sunday, April 5

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 2-mile hike to Mud Creek Falls on a pretty trail along a creek with an interesting covered bridge along the way. Meet at the Great Smoky Mtn. Visitor Center in Otto at 2 p.m., driving 20 miles round trip. If coming from Highlands or Cashiers, call leader for alternative meeting place. Visitors and children 10 or over are welcome, but no pets please. Call leader Kay Coriell, 369-6820, for reservations.

• At First Baptist Church on Main Street in Highlands, Easter musical program "Come Touch the Robe" at 6:30 p.m.

• Unitarian Universalist Fellowship member, Warren Riley, an accomplished musician, will present "Music in the Early Church," at 11 a.m. Children services also begin at 11 a.m. The fellowship is located at 85 Sierra Drive, just off Lakeside. 1.2 miles from Hard-ees. All are Welcome. For info call: 828/524-6777.

Tuesday & Wednesday, April 7-8

• The Macon County 4-H Council is now taking orders for raspberry, blueberry, and strawberry plants, grape vine, and apple trees with pick-up dates in April. These plants are bare root, except for blueberries, and come directly from the nursery. A limited supply of plants will be available, so place your orders early with Cooperative Extension at 349-2046 or 349-2054. Pick-up at the Agricultural Services Center, 193 Thomas Heights Road in Franklin. Contact Kathy Kuhlman, 4-H Agent at 349-2054.

Wed. & Fri, April 8 & 10

• Come and see the Easter Dramatic Musical "Believe" featuring the Apostle Thomas. Experience drama, song, dance and decide for yourself if the name "Doubting Thomas" is fitting. Community Bible Church. Wednesday, at 6 pm and Good Friday at 6:30pm followed by International Coffees and Desert. 828-526-4685.

Thursday, April 9

• The April meeting of The Western North Carolina Woodturners Club will meet on Thursday at 7 p.m. at the Blue Ridge School, in Glenville. Drive to the back of the school to the woodworking shop. Visitors are always welcomed. The club meets every second Thursday at the Blue Ridge School at 6 p.m. September through March and 7 p.m. April through August. Listen to WHLC (104.5 FM) at 5 p.m. for cancellation due to weather.

• The League of Women Voters of Macon County will host a program on the Native American Cultural Sites Preservation Project. The goal of the Project is to assist landowner in the identification and protection of Native American resources and to protect these sites. Project leaders Bill Dyar and Bill Evans will describe their work and discuss the importance of preserving our cultural heritage. There are many sites throughout Macon County and learning to identify them and understand their value will greatly enhance opportunities for conservation. The meeting will be held at Tartan Hall of the First Presbyterian Church. Lunch is available at noon by reservation—call 524-5192. The program will begin at 12:15. The public is invited.

Saturday, April 11

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a short, but strenuous hike, 1.5 miles up Chimneytop Mountain in Sapphire for a great 360 degree view. Meet at the

Cashiers Wachovia Bank at 9AM; returning between noon and 1 p.m. Drive: 6 miles round trip. Bring water, walking stick, a snack if you wish; wear sturdy hiking shoes. Call leader Walker Taylor, 743-6977, for reservations. Visitors are welcome, but no pets please.

Tuesday, April 14

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a five-mile moderate hike to Rough Run and High Falls with many wildflowers along the way, an elevation change less than 200 feet but some scrambling over rocks at High Falls. Meet at the big yellow sign in the Ingles parking lot on US Hwy 64 about one mile east of the Cashiers Crossroads at 10:00am; Drive 20 miles round trip. Call leader Carl Blozan at 743-1765 for reservations. Visitors are welcome, but no pets please.

Wednesday, April 15

• FreedomWorks members and area taxpayers will gather Wednesday at noon at the downtown gazebo, across from the Macon County Courthouse to send a message to leaders of both parties that taxpayers are angry with the bailouts, debt, pork projects, and wasteful spending rampant in Washington. Part of the national movement of "tea parties," protesters are gathering in the spirit of the Sons of Liberty in Boston, who in 1773 protested the British government by dumping tons of tea into the harbor. FreedomWorks is a grassroots organization with over 500,000 members nationwide dedicated to lower taxes, less government, and more freedom.

Saturday, April 18

• Mirror Lake Litter Pickup. Meet at Thorn Park at 9 am.

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a strenuous 6.2-mile hike on the Chunky Gal Trail to Boteler Peak with an elevation change of 1331 feet. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin at 9:00 a.m. Drive 34 miles round trip. Call leader Bill Van Horn at 369-1983 for reservations. Visitors are welcome, but no pets please

• A tour of Appalachian State University. Leave Highlands School at 7:15 a.m. Call John Dotson at 526-5587 or 526-5868 after 6 p.m.

Thursday-Sunday, April 16-19

• The Highlands School drama production "The Inner Willy" at PAC. It is a coming-of-age story about a boy, who with a little help from his mischievous conscience, matures and learns to make his own decisions on his way to becoming a man. Evening shows are at 7:30 p.m., and a the Sunday matinee starts at 2:30 p.m. For tickets, call 526-9047.

Sunday, April 19

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a five-mile moderate hike to Rough Run and High Falls with an elevation change of 200 feet but some scrambling over rocks at High Falls and many wildflowers along the trail. Bring water, a snack if you wish and wear sturdy shoes. Meet at Cashiers Wachovia Bank at 1:30 p.m. Drive 20 miles round trip. Call leader Carl Blozan at 743-1765 for reservations. Visitors are welcome, but no pets please.

Ruby Cinema

Hwy. 441, Franklin, NC
524-3076

April 3 - 8

FAST & FURIOUS

rated PG-13

Friday: (4:30), 7:15, 9:30

Sat & Sun: (2:15), (4:30), 7:15, 9:30

Mon - Thurs: (4:30), 7:15

MONSTER vs. ALIENS

rated PG

Friday: (4:10), 7, 9:10

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

Mon - Thurs: (4:10), 7

KNOWING

rated PG-13

Friday: (4:20), 7:10, 9:20

Sat & Sun: (2:10), (4:20), 7:10, 9:20

Mon - Thurs: (4:20), 7:10

DUPLICITY

rated PG-13

Friday: (4:05), 9:05

Sat & Sun: (4:05), 9:05

Mon - Thurs: (4:05)

RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN

rated PG

Friday: 7:05

Sat & Sun: (2:05), 7:05

Mon - Thurs: 7:05

HCP's 'Rumors' coming to PAC May 7



Highlands-Cashiers Players is excited to announce the cast for its spring production, "Rumors" by Neil Simon, directed by Donna Cochran, assisted by Peggy Fuller. "Rumors" is a play about 4 couples that arrive at a dinner party hosted by a husband and wife who never appear on stage. The plot revolves around the guests' efforts to unravel the mystery of their whereabouts. But this is not really a "whodunit," rather a "whodunwhat." Conflicting "Rumors" abound and the fast paced comedy unfolds, getting zanier with the arrival of each couple.

Newcomer Claire Simpson and veteran actor David Spivey play the Gorman's, the first to arrive. Stage couple Marcia Schmallo and Rick Siegel play the Ganz's, and Robin Phillips and Hilton Fuller- both new to HCP — are Cookie and Ernie Cusec, and the familiar actors, Colin Long and Katie Cochran play the Coopers, the last to arrive. The police are eventually on the scene and are played by Rich Harrison and Linsey Wisdom. "Rumors" promises a delightful evening for a mature audience (adult language). The play will be performed at PAC Thurs. through Sun. May 7-10 and the following week Thurs. thru Sun. May 14-17. Evening performances are at 7:30 and Sun. Matinees are at 2:30.

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• CLASSIFIEDS •

\$2. for each add'l. 10 words

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HELP WANTED

ELECTRICIAN'S HELPER, PLUMBER'S HELPER, AND CARPENTER'S HELPER - needed for a few days work. Most have transportation and some tools. May lead to more work. Call 828-421-1995 and leave message with name, phone # and bried experience overview. 4/9

RETAIL SALES: Stone Lantern Inc. is seeking part-time seasonal help. 25 hours per week, 9 am to 2:30 pm, Monday through Friday. Salary negotiable. Call 828/526-2769 or stop by for application.

HIRING FOR TWO NEW RESTAURANTS - Back of the house and front of the house needed. Call 526-3380 or 342-5174.

RN NEEDED FOR UPSCALE RETIREMENT COMMUNITY. 8 hours per week. Apply at Chestnut Hill, 64 Clubhouse Trail, Highlands, NC. Or email your resume to dotty.guenther@gmail.com. Drug screening and background check. EOE.

THE TOWN OF HIGHLANDS IS SEEKING A PART-TIME IT PROFESSIONAL (16-24 hrs/week).

This person should have knowledge of a server/client environment and a background in web design and programming, particularly in .html and .asp. For information about this position, direct inquires to Matt Shuler at the Highlands Town Office (828) 526-2118.

MEDICAL ASSISTANT/NURSE - needed at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Physician office setting, full-time position available. Current certification and/or NC license and BLS required, ACLS recommended. Full benefits, or the option to opt out of benefits for an increase in pay, available after 60 days of full-time employment. Pre-employment screening required. Call Human Resources at 828-526-1376 or apply online at www.hchospital.org.

RECEPTIONIST - needed at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Physician office setting, full-time position available. Previous medical/family practice office experience required. Full benefits, or the option to opt out of benefits for an increase in pay, available after 60 days of full-time employment. Pre-employment screening required. Call Human Resources at 828-526-1376 or apply online at www.hchospital.org.

RN/LPN needed at Fidelia Eckerd Living Center. Full time position available for 12 hour day and night shifts. Full benefits or the option to opt out of benefits for an increase in pay, available after 60 days of full-time employment. Pre-employment screening required. Call Human Resources at 828-526-1376 or apply online at www.hchospital.org.

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

CNA OR CNA II at Fidelia Eckerd Living Center. PRN positions are available. Our wage scale is \$11.00 to \$14.40 per hour, and you also receive shift and weekend differentials. Pre-employment substance screening. Call Human Resources, 828-526-1301 or apply online at www.hchospital.org.

LOST CAT

A MALE BLACK Cat, Keesa, lost in vicinity of Mt. Lori and N. Cobb. Wearing a hot pink rubber flea collar. Please call Tanya at 828-301-3690, 526-1706 or cell: 828-301-3696.

HOUSING WANTED

COUPLE SEEKING RENTAL HOUSE IN FRANKLIN. Newly remodeled two+bedroom, one+bath. Close to town. Wooden floors, preferred. Heat & air, if possible. W/D required. No pets, no children, non smokers. Please call Alena 828-342-8729.

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME - HUGE REDUCTION! 18 acres in Highlands with 1,200 feet of rushing creek includes 3 houses (one is brand new) REDUCED from \$5 million to \$3.2 million. Call 305 458-0033

44.76+/- ACRES \$189,000 BANK FORECLOSURE Tuckaseegee Riverfront Ridge Top Views MLS #67408 Marty Jones Realty BRIAN RENFRO, REALTOR 828-226-0118.

TRILLIUM BEST BUY BIG VIEW HOME SITE Great Building Site \$189,000 MLS #67480 Marty Jones Realty BRIAN RENFRO, REALTOR 828-226-0118

GOOD HOUSE FOR \$139,500 - 3 bed, 2 bath, high elevation, pond. Call Ann at Cabe Realty 828-526-2475.

COMMERCIAL IN WRIGHT SQUARE - two buildings with AC & Heat. Call Harold Brammer. 828-526-5673. 4/16

FOR SALE BY OWNER - 535 N. 4th Street. Zoned Commercial. \$389,000. Currently rented at \$2,500 a month. Call 770-827-0450. (st. 2/19)

NEW LUXURY HOME FOR SALE OR LEASE IN SCALY Mt. 3 BR, 3.5 BA, 2.88 acres. Appraised \$757,000, reduced to \$499,900 or lease \$2750/mth. Additional lots for sale. 404-272-2131 www.thomasknob.com/homes.html (5/14)

RESIDENTIAL FOR RENT

2 BED, 2 BATH CABIN - Charming. Completely renovated. \$800 a month. In Scaly Mountain. Call 423-715-7757. 4/16

2 BED, 1 BATH APARTMENT for rent in Scaly Mountain. \$500 per month includes utilities. Call Becky at Cabe Realty 828-526-2475. 4/16

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

DOWNTOWN FURNISHED! Spacious 1/1, full kitchen, walk in closet, balcony, small pets allowed. 526-3363 Call for appt. (st 3/5)

FOR RENT AND SALE - 2/2 condo, LR, DR, Sun room, W/D. Walk to town. Available year round. Call 828-421-2144

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

DOWNTOWN APARTMENT RENTAL - One bedroom (Queen), one bath, vaulted ceiling in great room, heat and air with gas fireplace. Fully furnished with W/D, cozy and comfortable. Reduced to \$650 a month plus utilities. Call 526-4983 or 421-3614.

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• CLASSIFIEDS •

1 BED, 1 BATH and small room with bunk beds on Lake Sequoyah. Furnished, two boats. \$800 a month including utilities except phone. No pets, no smoking. Call Tony at 828-332-7830.

SAPPHIRE NC - 2 Story 3Bed/3 Bath, Yr round views, 2 decks, remodeled, Furnished, 2 car garage. Available yearly or seasonal. 561-626-9556

FURNISHED 3BD2BATH HOUSE IN MIRROR LAKE area available for 6-12 month lease \$1200+ utilities. Call 770-977-5692.

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

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

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

COMMERCIAL FOR RENT

RENTAL SPACE IN WRIGHT SQUARE - Half a building or two floors of one building. Call Harold Brammer. 828-526-5673. 4/16

2,300+/-SQ. FT. OF OFFICE/RETAIL AVAILABLE for lease or rent to own. Excellent visibility! Location is 2271 Dillard Road. Asking \$1,250 per month. 526-8953.

VACATION RENTAL

LUXURY CABIN, 2 Bedrooms, 2.5 Baths, Mountain Views. See details at VRBO.com/194328. Call 305-458-0033. 4/2

MOUNTAIN AND SUNSET VIEWS, 4 Bedrooms, 2.5 Baths, Like New. See details at

VRBO.com/181808. Call 305 213-0333. 4/2

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

THE LODGE ON MIRROR LAKE - Fish or canoe from deck. Available weekly, monthly, No min. Call 828-342-2302.

ITEMS FOR SALE

STEEL BUILDING 22 gauge, 25' width, 24' length, 12' height, never erected. Paid \$5,862.00. Sacrifice \$4,000. (828) 526-4313, (828) 787-2478 or (828) 526-3181. 4/2

16" FISHING BOAT NEW with Trolling motor, Charger, New Bat. } Untippable, \$1000 OBO Call 828-200-0701 3/26

CHOPPER/SHREDDER. 10 HP. Excellent Condition. \$200. Call 526-9534.

STORE MOVING, EVERYTHING PRICED FOR QUICK SALE OR BEST OFFER. Oriental rug 8x10, beautiful, red. Walnut dining table and four chairs, antique writing desk/credenza with backboard, 5' x 40 inches exotic wildlife painting, high quality bar refrigerator, 34"x24," beveled Italian glass mirror, 30"x36," heavy mahogany room divider/wall unit, much more. 828-226-0886 4/2

BOAT, ENGINE, TRAILER - Great for fishing. Needs some work. \$600. Call 828-200-0701

VARIOUS BEDROOM ITEMS - Brass and Wrought Iron antique Victorian replica headboards - one king and two queen. Also top-of-the-line Sealy Posturepedic mattress and box spring sets - one king and two queens. Call 526-9803. 4/26

LARGE PICKUP LOAD OF MT. LAUREL Lengths 4 to 6 feet. Mt. Laurel, Kusa Dogwoods, Norway and Serbia Spruce, Red maples, Service Derry, Rhododendron. Call 828-293-5398. (3/12)

WOODBURNING FIREPLACE INSERT - Strong and sturdy, 30 inches wide, 29 inches deep

and 67 inches high. \$175. Call 526-5749.

HONEY FOR SALE - Blue Valley honey, perfect amber color, 3/4 lb. bears, \$5 each. work in town. Call Bruce at 526-9021.

GE PROFILE WHITE COUNTERTOP GAS RANGE WITH DOWNDRAFT. Like new. \$185 Call 787-2232.

KOLCRAFT JEEP WAGONEER TANDEM DOUBLE STROLLER. Used rarely. Basically brand new. \$100 or OBO. Call 526-2536.

125-GALLON ALL-GLASS AQUARIUM - over 6 feet in length, was a salt-water shark-only tank. Comes with Ehiem Pro series-2 external canister filter, and optional mahogany base. Will settle for \$500; base, extras and help moving it are optional but free. Call cell 828-342-2809

DRY, HARDWOOD, FIREWOOD - Priced to Sell! Call 828-526-4946 or 828-200-0268.

SMALL EMERALD AND GOLD RING. Originally \$300 Asking \$175. 828-631-2675 after 5 p.m.

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• See CLASSIFIEDS page 20

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• **CLASSIFIEDS** •

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Police to crack down on use of cell phones by drivers under 18

A little known law dealing with the use of wireless telephones for drivers under the age of 18 went into effect on July 1, 2008 and law enforcement officers are enforcing it.

"Unlawful use of a mobile phone by persons under 18 years of age" refers to the use of any technology that provides access to digital media including a camera, electronic mail, music, Internet or games as well as mobile phones (cell phones) and hands-free cell phone paraphernalia.

No one under the age of 18 years can operate a motor vehicle on a public street or highway or public vehicular area while using a mobile telephone or any additional technology associated with a mobile telephone while the vehicle is in motion. They can use them in a stationary vehicle.

The only exception to the rule is for an emergency when an under 18 year-old driver may be talking to an emergency response operator; a hospital, physician's office, or health clinic; a public or privately owned ambulance company or service; a fire department; or a law enforcement agency or a parent or legal guardian.

The fine is \$25 and this is an offense to which a defendant may waive the right to a hearing or trial and admit responsibility for the infraction. In addition, no drivers license points, insurance surcharge, or court costs shall be assessed as a result of a violation

The law applies to mobile hands-free devices, too. Except for emergency situations, drivers under the age of 18 can't use a wireless telephone, pager, laptop or any other electronic communication or mobile services device to speak or text while driving in any manner, even hands-free.

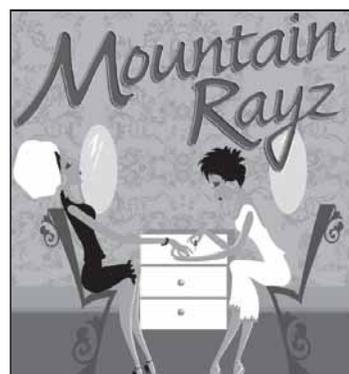
The law is stricter for drivers under the age of 18 - provisional drivers - because statistics show that teen drivers are more likely than older drivers to be involved in crashes because they lack driving experience and tend to take greater risks. Teen drivers are vulnerable to driving distractions such as talking with passengers, eating or drinking, and talking or texting on wireless phones, which increase the chance of getting involved in serious vehicle crashes.

• See CELL PHONES page 21

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• **SERVICE DIRECTORY** •

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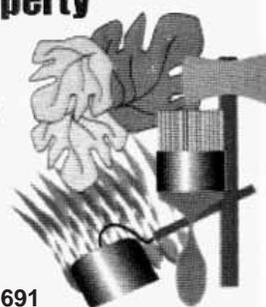
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... CELL PHONES from page 20

Young people are rarely focused enough at that age to multi-task while operating a vehicle," said Highlands Police Chief Bill Harrell. "Most adults even have a hard enough time, much less a person just learning the rules of the road, and getting acclimated to a vehicle. Most accidents are caused by distractions, and putting that device in the hands of an inexperienced driver is increasing the chances of serious crashes beyond justification."

Harrell said the police department will be diligent in enforcing the offense for the safety of motor vehicle operators, passengers & pedestrians alike, he said.

Parents cannot override the law by giving their children permission to use the phones or hands-free features whether built into the car or not, while driving, and the law applies to all 18-year-olds whether they are emancipated or still living with their parents.

Using a hands-free device is considered a "secondary violation meaning that a law enforcement officer can cite a driver for using a hands-free wireless phone if pulled over for another violation.

However, the prohibition against using a handheld wireless telephone while driving is a "primary" violation for which a law enforcement officer can pull a driver over.

These North Carolina laws apply to all drivers under the age of 18 whether they are NC drivers or out-of-state drivers whose home states do not have such laws.

- Kim Lewicki

• POLICE & FIRE •

The following are the Highlands Police Dept. log entries for March 23-28. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor, or public officials have been used.

March 23

- At 8 a.m., the breaking and entering with larceny was reported at a residence on Shelby Court where two diamond rings valued at \$2,900 were missing.

- At 2:34 p.m., officers responded to a call of two suspicious people in the yard of a residence on Pierson Drive. It was unfounded.

March 24

- At 10:30 p.m., officers found a door opened at a residence on Foreman Road. There was no problem.

March 27

- At 11:16 a.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident in Highlands Plaza. There were no injuries.

- Officers assisted with an investigation of a breaking and entering at a residence on Dillard Road.

- Officers assisted with the drug dog at Highlands School where "past presence" was indicated by K9 Ruby.

March 28

- Officers responded to a call for service for a resident on Satulah Road concerning construction workers across the road.

- At 8:05 p.m., officers followed a car on Main Street whose right passenger door was open while the vehicle was moving. They followed it to where it parked at Main and Second streets at which point a woman got out of the car and sat on the stone steps along the road. At that point, officers learned that the woman had been hit in the mouth by the male driver.

- At 8:09 p.m., Jesse Boyd Coffeen, 29, of Franklin, was arrested for assault on a female and was held on a secured \$1,000 domestic violence bond.

- During the week, officers issued 9 citations and responded to 4 alarms.

The following are the Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries for the week of March 24-30

March 24

- The dept. responded to a fire alarm at the Fidelia Eckerd Center. It was set when a water pipe burst.

March 29

- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Blue Valley Road. The victim was transported to the hospital.

March 30

- The dept. assisted the Cashiers Fire Dept. with a controlled burn of a structure.

• FUN & GAMES •

Hex-a-Ku[©] 2009

by Pete Sarjeant and Don Cook

OBJECT:

A mystery word or phrase using all different letters is designated by circled squares (other short words will appear when solving, for which a list of meanings is provided). Every puzzle has a different mystery word or phrase (no spaces). Assign different letters to each square of each column and row. In addition, 3x2 cells in the puzzle layout have the same different letters. (This is similar to Sudoku but uses letters instead of numbers.)

How to Solve:

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

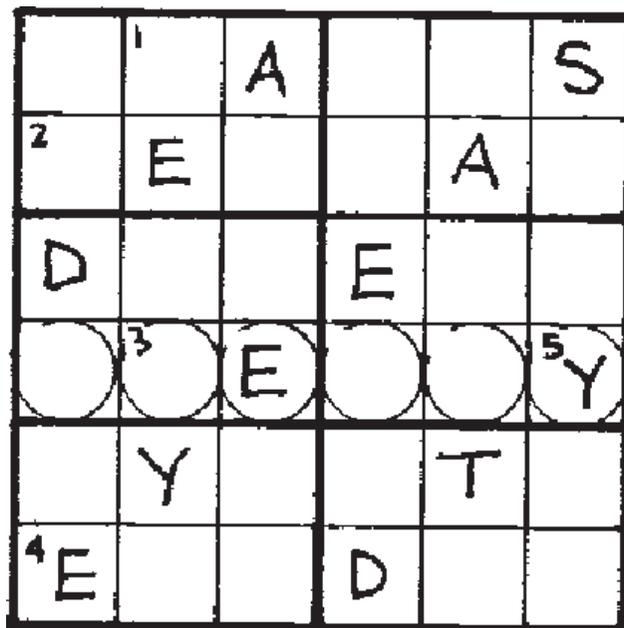
**Mystery Word
Having Stability**

Across

- Bright as ____ (3)
- Positive Answer (3)
- Oriental Beverage (3)
- "Is" (Fr.) (3)

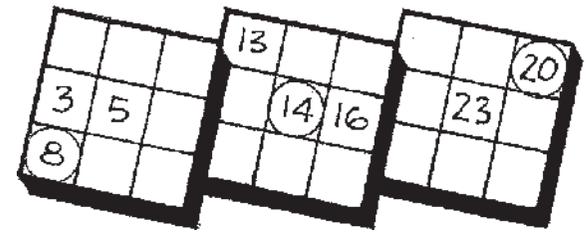
Down

- Positive answer (Medieval) (3)



PseudoCube[©]

by Pete Sarjeant and Don Cook



#AN1A Level of Difficulty - Easy

THE SETUP:

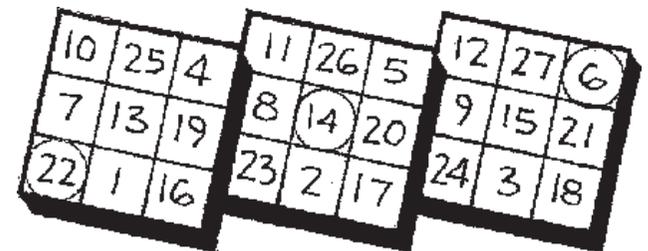
The cube has 27 consecutive numbers in it, arranged in three layers with 9 numbers each. These numbers are arranged in a special pattern: For each layer, the sum of the three numbers in each row, column or diagonal, is 3 times its center number. Eight diagonals connect all 3 layers by running through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

THE CHALLENGE:

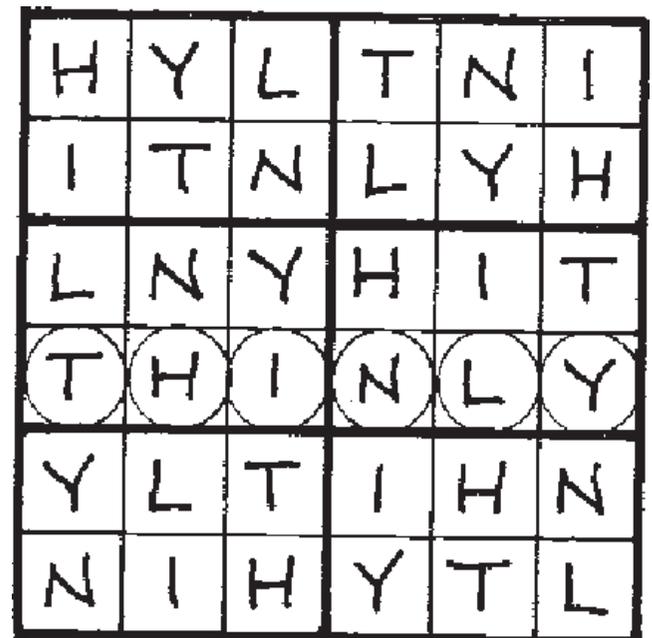
Start with the three center numbers for each layer and the other numbers given. Now pour a cup of coffee, pick up a pencil and eraser and try to figure out where the other numbers belong. Good Luck!

Email: pseudocube8@aol.com.

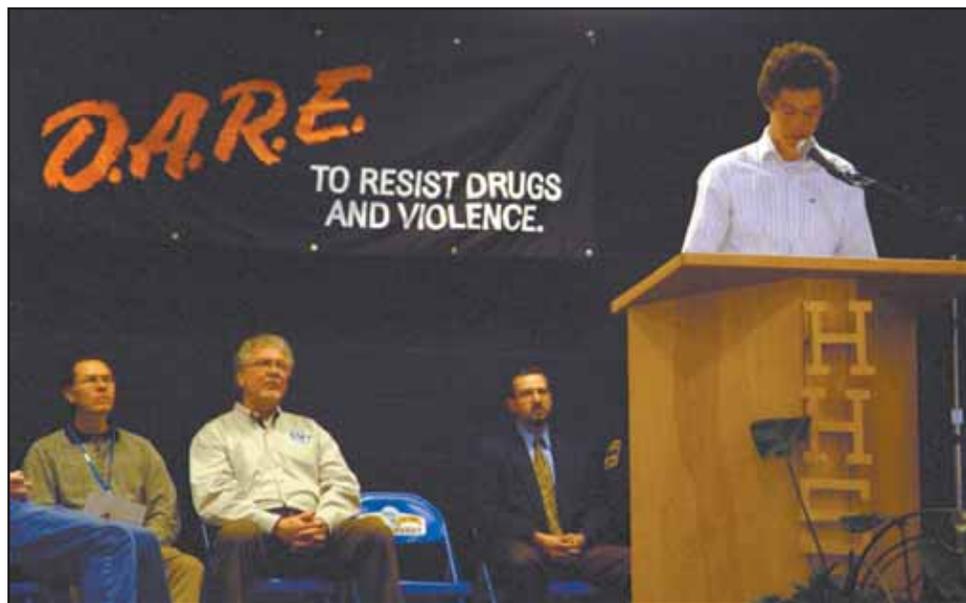
Solution to #AN1A in March 26 issue



Solution to March 26 Hex-a-Ku



Highlands students graduate from DARE program



To encourage a drug-free life, fifth-graders in Macon County schools participate in the year-long DARE program sponsored by the county law enforcement offices. This year's DARE Graduation was Thursday, March 26 at Highlands School. Highlands School Resource Officer Ronnie Castle is also the DARE Officer and he presided over the ceremony. A total of 36 5th-graders were awarded DARE certificates. Chase Harris, Carson Pair, Whitney Billingsley, Sarah Henry, and Allie Wilkes read their DARE essays. Ezra Herz, a senior, also spoke to the DARE graduates about his experiences living a drug-free life, and he encouraged the students to stand up for each other and support each other to help them resist the temptation to do drugs or alcohol. Pictured above is Highlands School Asst. Principal Jim Draheim, Principal Brian Jetter, Highlands Police Chief Bill Harrell and Highlands School senior, Ezra Herz.



Thirty-five 5th grade students graduated from the program.
Photos by Carol Bowen



• BIZ NEWS •

With limited license retired doctors can volunteer

When Dr. John M. Smith retired to Cashiers from St. Simon's Island, Ga., last year, he knew he didn't want to let a lifetime of knowledge go to waste. Smith had heard about the Community Care Clinic, which serves low-income, uninsured people in the Cashiers, Highlands and surrounding region. So the internist got his North Carolina limited license and immediately began volunteering at the free clinic.



Dr. John M. Smith

Now, he works about once a month on Thursday nights, helping anyone from the working man he helped diagnose with diabetes to the woman who feared she had breast cancer learn it was a false alarm.

"It allows me to continue to do what I know best, and that's to practice medicine," Smith said. "I enjoy it and there's a need, so it's very rewarding for both the patients and us who volunteer."

Retired doctors looking to help at the area's Community Care Clinic need only to secure a limited license in North Carolina in order to volunteer at the free clinic. Help is greatly needed there, Smith said, and getting a limited license is relatively easy, thanks to the N.C. Medical Board's computerized application process.

"A lot of doctors retire and have a knowl-

edge base that is not going away, and it catalyzes them to stay up with what's going on in the world of medicine," Smith said, encouraging fellow doctors to get involved. "No question about it: it is a very positive experience."

The clinic is open every Thursday from 5-9 p.m. Many people are involved – from doctors to nurses, translators and administrative workers – all helping ensure that people in this region receive the medical help they need.

Jerry Hermanson, clinic director, said doctors – particularly those with a primary care specialty – are needed. Last year, the clinic saw 1,499 visits, up from 1,393 in 2007 and 824 in 2006. The numbers continue to rise, and especially as the economy worsens, more and more people are expected to seek help.

"We need more doctors like John Smith to volunteer at the Community Care Clinic," Hermanson said. "A North Carolina limited license is an easy way for a retired doctor to continue giving back right here in the Cashiers-Highlands area. They are providing such a tremendous service to people who are often desperate. Everyone deserves basic health care."

To volunteer at the clinic or make a tax-deductible donation, call (828) 526-1991.

... LETTERS continued from page 2

public review and publication. County Commissioner Brian McClellan, a voting member of the TDC, correctly stated that each member of the TDC had access to the Chamber of Commerce budget, since each is a member of the Chamber. Furthermore, Chamber Executive Director Bob KIELTYKA informed the TDC that the Chamber budget was available to the members of the TDC for use in generating the occupancy tax budget provided the document be treated confidentially as a private document not subject to publication.

The Highlands Newspaper has often stated that Occupancy Tax funds and Chamber of Commerce funds are comingled. This is incorrect. The funds from each operation are accounted for in separate accounting programs, diligently monitored, and as previously stated professionally audited annually.

Since the Chamber of Commerce and the Highlands Visitor Center, which is financed by the Occupancy Tax, share common housing there is a division of overhead costs divided between the two operations based on use. Each line item in the respective budgets reflects the varying percentage division of costs. For example, an

estimated 70% of the physical plant is dedicated to Visitor Center operations thus 70% of physical plant expenses are paid by the Visitor Center. Operation of the Visitor Center is a Chamber responsibility as stipulated in the Chamber contract with Macon County.

Lastly, the Highlands Chamber of Commerce has served Macon County as administrator of that portion of the occupancy tax collected in the Highlands District since 1986.

In 2008 the County Commissioners appointed the Highlands TDC to provide the commissioners with additional oversight of the administration of the program by the Highlands Chamber and as stated in the TDC By-Laws: "The TDC shall be an advisory commission established by the Board of Commissioners of the County of Macon to serve at its pleasure pursuant to the North Carolina General Statutes Section 153A-76."

Bob Kieltyka
Executive Director
Highlands Area
Chamber of Commerce
Gary Drake
Chairman Highlands TDC

• BIZ NEWS •

Helms joins Meadows Mountain

Agents from two top firms in Highlands are joining forces on May 1. Meadows Mountain Realty is pleased to announce the affiliation of Doug Helms of Blackrock Realty Group. Doug has 10 years of experience in the general real estate market in Highlands, has consistently been one of the top producing agents in the Highlands-Cashiers Market and currently represents over \$24 million of listing inventory.



Doug Helms

These two designations required many hours of additional education and training, demonstrating Doug's high level of dedication to his profession. "We are so pleased to have a professional of Doug's stature joining our Team at Meadows Mountain Realty. Combining his talents with those of our existing Team will only make our company stronger," said Judy Michaud, Broker-in-charge and

Owner of the company.

Meadows Mountain Realty was the number one firm in Highlands in 2008 and continues that trend in 2009. The Team at Meadows Mountain Realty provides the most aggressive marketing available and the addition of Doug Helms will provide customers with additional sales support and effort in marketing their homes and property.

... NEW ROLE continued from page 14

ing the AYP," he said.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measures the yearly progress of different groups of students at the school, district, and state levels against yearly targets in reading/language arts and mathematics.

Highlands School met all 13 of the 13 targets for AYP, but Brigman wants every school in the district to hit each of its goals.

Brigman also wants 100% ABC growth targets met in each school with every child reading and doing math at or above grade level by the end of Grade 3.

Students in grades 3-8 must complete state end-of-grade tests in reading and mathematics at the conclusion of each school year.

Student performance on the state's end-of-grade tests is reported in levels ranging from I-IV. Students are considered to be at or above grade level if they receive a score of Achievement Level III or IV on the state's tests.

At the high school level students enrolled in the following courses must complete state ABCs End-of-Course tests at the conclusion of each course: English I, Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Biology, Chemistry, Physical Science, Physics, Civics and Economics, and US History.

Student performance on the state's end-of-course tests is reported in levels ranging from I-IV. Students are considered to be at or above grade level if they receive a score of Achievement Level III or IV on the state's tests.

"I believe the integration of Instructional Facilitators in grades K-8 will particularly help us reach these goals," he said.

Instruction Facilitators would leave their assigned classroom for two years but will guarantee their old job after the two-year stint.

Brigman said optimally he would like to use the district's National Board Certified Teachers because they represent the best of the best, but guidelines concerning their pay status as it applies to their subject requirements under the NBCT classification are unclear.

"We need to see if they can continue receiving their NBCT pay grade as facilitators if they're not teaching in their specific subject field," said Brigman.

BOE member Frieda Bennett said she's sure there won't be a lack of interest on teachers' parts but she said it is paramount to guarantee those who agree to participate in the program their jobs back in their respective classrooms. She also said that if the NBCT aspect represents a snag, there are likely plenty of teachers who would qualify.

The Instruction Facilitators are not going to be evaluators, but rather support figures for teachers. Brigman said using eight teachers currently employed and shifting them to the new position paid for by federal funds rather than state funds, the district can satisfy at least some of the state's demand for \$430,000 is discretionary cuts.

"On paper we're moving personnel, saving jobs instead of cutting them and can pay them out of federal stimulus money we are entitled to rather than state funds," he said.

Teachers interested in the applying for the new positions should contact the administration in Franklin. There will be a two-week training period required — one week in July and one week in June.

"I'm hoping interested teachers come forward," said Brigman.

— **Kim Lewicki**

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