

Highlands' Newspaper

FREE

Volume 9, Number 5

PDF Version - www.HighlandsInfo.com

Thursday, Feb. 3, 2011

FRI	SAT	SUN
32 \ 29F	35 \ 21F	45 \ 25F

Saturday, Feb. 5

- At The Bascom Art Cinema in the Loft Gallery at 2 pm, Frank Lloyd Wright 2. Frank Lloyd Wright was the greatest of all American architects, a man who believed he was destined to redesign the world, creating everything anew. His architectural achievements were often overshadowed by the turbulence of his melodramatic life. This riveting film brings Wright's unforgettable story to life.

- At Paoletti's Restaurant, intimate Wine Tasting at the bar at 1 pm. Great inexpensive wines from around the world, available for retail sales. Cheese and Crackers are served. Cost: \$20 per person refundable with case purchase.

- At Cyprus International Restaurant, live music beginning at 9 p.m. No cover.

Sunday, Feb. 6

- Super Bowl Party at The Pizza Place beginning at 4 p.m. Taking order from noon on.

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 1-mile hike in Black Rock Mt. State Park in GA on an easy loop trail around Taylor Lake plus a visit to the overlook above Clayton. Call leader Kay Coriell at 369-6820 for reservations.

Tuesday, Feb 8

- At The Highlands Dialogue's Tuesday discussion, Karen Hawk: "The Burqa: Anti Slavery or Pro-Choice?" article from Sept/Oct 2010 The Humanist at the Civic Center from 10-11:30 a.m. For more information e-mail John Gaston johngaston@aol.com or Karen Hawk hwnkncrw@earthlink.net.

Wednesday, Feb. 9

- The King Arthur Flour Company of Norwich, Vt., America's Oldest Flour Company, will visit Highlands School at 9 a.m., to teach 4th-7th grade students how to bake bread from scratch through its "Life Skills Bread Baking Program." Students will then bake their own loaves for donation to CareNet in Franklin, N.C.

Citizens oppose changing ordinance

Changing the town ordinance to be consistent with the Council-Manager form of government is a no go – in fact, if the Town Board wants to continue on that path, it must start over from scratch.

At the Feb. 2 Town Board meeting about 25 citizens turned out to speak during the required Public Hearing on the topic – the majority of whom spoke against changing the ordinance.

In an unprecedented move, the first person to speak during the Public Hearing was Mayor David Wilkes, who relinquished his seat as Mayor during the Public Hearing "because I have an interest in this personally as a citizen."

He handed the gavel to Mayor Pro Temp John Dotson to become "part of the audience" at which point he explained to the audience why the Town Board that sat in 2008 changed the form of government – mainly because running the town had become significantly more difficult and more detailed. He said the Charter Implementing

• See ORDINANCE page 15

85% grade needed on online test to sub in MC Schools

Effective immediately, the 400+ people on the Macon County Schools Substitute list and those wishing to be added to that list, will now have to complete an 8-12 hour, 65 multiple-choice question, online test to continue substituting at area schools.

At the Jan. 24 Macon County Board of Education meeting, Director of Personnel Dan Moore explained the need and benefits to initiating the program.

"The primary reason to do this is to equip our substitute teaching corps with the basic skills necessary to serve our children in an effective capacity," said Moore. "All districts provide training for substitutes – Macon County Schools has been deficient in this area for the last few years."

Moore said this is not a mandate from the state – instead it's a district initiative meant to both protect students and the system as a whole.

Completion of the course with

• See SUB page 15

Ground hogs agree about spring



From left: Punxsutawney Phil of PA and General Beau Lee of GA.

Around the 5th century, the European Celts believed animals had certain "supernatural" powers on special days that were half-way between the Winter Equinox and Spring Solstice (40 days after Christmas and 40 days before Easter). Folklore from Germany and France said when groundhogs and bears came out of their winter dens too early, they were frightened by their shadow and retreated back inside for 4-6 weeks. Originally called "Candlemas Day," in America, Candlemas Day became "Groundhog Day" to honor the whiskery waddler. It's spring just around the corner if the groundhog doesn't see his shadow, but at least six more weeks of winter if he does.

State fiscal woes may translate to county woes

At its annual worksession last Saturday, the Macon County Commission learned the county's 2011 revenues may be better than 2010

revenues but much of what lies ahead for the county depends on the fiscal condition of the state. The

• See FISCAL page 14

• Inside •

FORUM	2
Letters	2
Wooldridge	4
Salzarulo	5
Just Hers	7
Coach's Corner	8
Events	10
Police & Fire	17
Classifieds	17

'Operation Ice Melt' nets 18 on drug felonies

Last Thursday, law enforcement officers from several WNC agencies that participated in "Operation Ice Melt" arrested numerous suspects on drug related charges.

Agencies that participated in the three-month investigation were the Macon County Sheriff's Office Narcotics Unit, the Jackson and Swain County Sheriff's Offices and the NC State Bureau of Investigation.

In addition, the D.E.A Asheville Office, 30th District Attorney's Office, Haywood & Clay County Sheriff's Offices, NC Probation & Parole and the Cherokee Indian Police also provided assistance.

During the course of this investigation 18 individuals were targeted for assisting in the manufacturing of methamphetamine. Charges include conspiracy to traffic methamphetamine and conspiracy to manufacture methamphetamine. While each agency has jurisdictional boundaries, law enforcement officers understand that

• See ICE MELT page 14

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• LETTERS •

Youth has lack of appreciation

Dear Editor,

I'm not sure if I'm angry, embarrassed, disappointed, or a combination there of, because of an event that was held here in Franklin, Saturday, January 22 — The American Legion Post 108 held a Constitutional Speech competition for high school students.

Students were to give an eight- to 10-minute prepared speech on the Constitution of the United States. The second part of the contest was a three- to five-minute extemporaneous speech on a selected amendment to the Constitution. Prizes were awarded and the winner is eligible to participate in the next level of the contest to be held in Hickory. As the student continues winning in the competitions, he or she is able to win large sums of monies for their college education.

Our Legion Post is to be commended for their organization, with judges, timers, assistants for the students, and other members there to assist or just add support. These Legion members, who have served our country, defending our Constitution while in the armed forces, gave up their Saturday to be there to help the students.

At this first level of competition, there

were just two students participating from all of Western North Carolina, one from Waynesville, and one from Murphy. There were no students, none, zero, nada, from Franklin or any part of Macon County. Does this indicate the level of their patriotism, of love and respect for our country? The lack of gratitude for lives lost, or the sacrifices made by past generations, their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents so that young Americans can continue to live under freedom? If this is the case, where have we gone wrong?

It is our duty to set an example for our young people and instill the values and principles of American.

Hal Chapman
Otto, NC

Tell Ms. Doubleday Ms. Keener did see it!

Dear Editor,

In response to Ms. Doubleday's letter in the Jan. 27th issue of Highlands' Newspaper entitled "Did Keener see it?" which referred to my letter in the Jan. 20th edition of the paper entitled "Wannabees still don't get it."

Yes, Ms. Doubleday, I saw it. Three other witnesses saw it, as well. And yes, it was our 6-ft. chain link fence that we watched Mama Bear climb over, as well as one of her three yearling cubs.

And yes, I did have chicken in the oven

smelling really good and with her nose sniffing the air she was definitely on a mission to find its location.

And yes, it was our dogs she attacked when she crossed the fence. She nailed one of them in his private area and let's just say it was just fortunate that he had already been neutered. And if you ever want to feel unsafe in your own home watch the door and its frame give with every bounce of the bear on the outside of your door. It's not a good feeling.

We didn't want to shoot her. She had three cubs. Had my husband not gone out the back door and fired off both barrels of the shotgun into the air giving off the large blast, yes, she would've been in our living room and we would have had to kill her. Our door was not strong enough to hold her back.

She and her cub then hit the fence wide open going over the same way they came and all disappeared. But not for long.

In the early hours of the next morning, she and her cubs came back. Determined to have a chicken feast, they ripped the door off the hen house and got two of my laying hens before we could fire off another shot. I called the bear hunters the next morning for this "nuisance bear" and they came and ran her and cubs a good distance away into Blue Valley. And get this Mr. Doubleday...I know for a fact that they did not shoot her or her cubs as they were all back at our farm in exactly five days. We did this many times. Bear hunters ran her off and within a week they were all back.

We tried stretching an electric fence outside the chain link and one night she got zapped and it did deter her from coming into the yard for more chickens. But she wasn't happy with us and went to our pump house outside the fence and removed the heavy concrete lid leaving her muddy tracks all over the lid and pulled all the insulation from around the pump. Temperatures fell that autumn night and needless to say we had no water the next morning since the pump froze.

We had to laugh as she had gotten her revenge. How smart is that? We dealt with her up until the first good cold and when snow came she finally just stopped coming. Living hand to mouth, the cost of a new storm door, window screen, water pump repairs, electric fences, two laying hens and losing sleep standing guard all night and going to work the next day equals "nuisance bears." Specific enough, Ms. Doubleday? I hope so. I'm sure the Highlands' Newspaper and readers must be getting tired of my long letters, as I am having to "specify" way too much.

Lastly, I never once implied or made any implication that the local bear hunters only shoot nuisance bears and not nature bears. I stated the difference in the way Ms.

Bell described bears (in her letter in the Jan. 13th edition entitled "Another local's take on bear hunting and other issues" and the way we describe them.

Am I writing in Greek or what? Or is it that some just like to nitpick to draw attention away from the real issue?

And Ms. Doubleday, you must think I just fell off the turnip truck if you think I would print gossip in the newspaper after just writing about how destructive it can be. Even though there is a lot of hearsay about your way of living with the wildlife and the bear hunters and hounds, I've chosen not to write about those stories. I sure would like to get answers straight from the horse's mouth though but I'm not an investigative reporter. However I do find it rather amusing that you of all people would be asking "truth or hearsay" when we could be asking you a lot of the same.

Audrey Keener
Highlands

Say 'No' to Blue Valley/Overflow Wilderness Area

Dear Editor,

Don't be snookered by recent articles saying there will be no change to Blue Valley if it is in a designated a Wilderness Area.

And yes, the road will be blocked — it will be blocked at the Abes Creek Junction with the existing Blue Valley Road which is the west end of the Blue Valley experimental forest.

Where it crosses the road going south up the road to the old Ben Webb fields, the Blue Valley Road will no longer be needed.

As a wilderness designation, no motorized vehicles or equipment can be used there. That also goes for using aircraft to fight wild fires or maintain the four wildlife fields now inside the proposed wilderness area or chainsaws to maintain existing trails or equipment to maintain the small cemetery inside the proposed area.

As far as camping goes, this area has always been a favorite with locals who want to do primitive camping or go berry picking or picnicking or just ride along the existing road to view wildlife.

When this is designated wilderness, this all stops. If you think I'm not right, look at what happened in the Ellicott Rock Wilderness Area.

As far as Bob Zahner goes, as Nathalie Sato suggested in Highlands' Newspaper a while back, name a trail after him or something, but leave Blue Valley as it is, not designated as a Wilderness Area.

Lawrence Munger
Highlands

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.

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Ex-Highlands Principal Brooks assigned to East Franklin School

By Dr. Dan Brigman
MC Schools Superintendent

As some in our community may already be aware, I recently made a decision as that has brought new leadership to one of our schools. Mr. Larry Brooks has assumed duties as Interim Principal at East Franklin Elementary School effective January 31, 2011, and I am very grateful to him for his willingness to once again give of himself and his time to our school system. Brooks replaces Terry Bradley.

The reasons behind this decision are the subject of an ongoing investigation, and

North Carolina law requires that they remain strictly confidential. I am keeping members of our Board of Education generally informed of this matter. However, the personnel process requires that board members refrain from involvement, participation, or discussion of the matter at this time, pending the conclusion of my investigation.

What I can share is that at this time is that this matter does not involve any criminal activity, nor does it involve any students of Macon County Schools. No improper conduct by any other party is suspected or being investigated at this time.

The MC Clerk of Court no longer processing passport applications

The federal government recently made changes in passport processing requirements that make it more time consuming for his staff and costlier to the state.

"I regret that it has become necessary to discontinue this service to the public, because we do process a significant number of passport applications each month," Perry said. "However, the other side of that coin is that our staff spends a considerable amount of time doing so. With the additional requirements the federal government recently put on processing agents, I feel the time we would spend with passports would take away from our primary responsibility, which is to the court system and to the citizens who use it."

The recent changes include tracking each passport application from the time it is mailed until it is received at a federal passport center.

"I realize that a passport application is a sensitive document, but tracking each one requires a considerable amount of time, and that is time taken from our primary duties."

In addition, Perry said that the state is being asked to pay for priority mail envelopes in which to mail applications to processing centers. "In effect, the federal government is

asking us to not only spend more time processing applications, but we are expected to pay for it as well," he said.

Perry said the Franklin Post Office is now processing applications, so residents will not have to travel out of town to get their passports.

Drowning in Little TN under investigation

By Warren Cabe
MC Emergency Services Director

Rescue crews recovered an apparent drowning victim from the Little Tennessee River in Franklin on Sunday.

Macon County 9-1-1 received a call at approximately 1:15 PM from a bike rider on the Greenway between Arthur Drake Road and Wesley's Park who saw what appeared to be someone in the water.

Crews recovered the body of Kenneth W. Kubit, 43, of Franklin at approximately 2:30 PM. The Franklin Police Department is conducting an investigation but foul play is not suspected at this time.

• THANKS •

Tilsons forever grateful

We would like to express our heart-felt love and appreciation to each and everyone who helped us through Jerry's illness and subsequent death.

We can not even begin to name everyone and all the wonderful things they have done and are still doing for us, so we won't try because we don't want to leave anyone or anything out. Just know you will always be in our hearts.

Our lives have been changed forever and our hearts break daily over the loss of our loved one. It gives us great comfort to know we have such wonderful friends and live in such a caring community.

Please remember us in prayers. May God richly bless each and every one of you.

With great love and appreciation
Elaine, David, Gabrielle, and Jessica

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...on this day from the History Guy

Feb 3, 1913

The 16th Amendment to the US Constitution is ratified, authorising the imposition and collection of an income tax.

The impact of Amendment Sixteen
I think has clearly been seen.
See, some think it an idea pretty and winsome
that the government should have some of our income.
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a statement and send a certain percentile
of whatever it is we have made,
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• LAUGHING AT LIFE •

The Adventures of Jacques Strap

Dateline: Summer of 1963 - Miami Beach, Florida.

Jacques came to the Miami Beach Police Department as a loner, not in the sense he was anti-social or withdrawn. To the contrary, ole Jacques was a happy-go-lucky gregarious French policeman who couldn't take his eyes off the ladies, especially American ones. He was part of an exchange program called "swap a cop" where participating agencies exchanged officers so they could learn new techniques and procedures.

The first thing one learns when receiving any exchange cop is, no matter where they're from, the visiting cop's English is always better than what we sent them. Why we ever picked ole Billy, 'slap em up side the head' Gibson, is beyond me. He barely spoke English with a strong Cajun accent but little else. Just because he was born in New Orleans doesn't mean he'll necessarily fit in Paris. I wasn't sure Paris was ready for ole Billy. The only French word he knew was that stupid voulez-vous cliché thing. Oh, he could also say Chevrolet coupe' with a French accent. That's it.

And why they stuck Jacques with me is still a mystery. Usually an officer is being punished when he's assigned an exchange cop but I remember specifically being in good standing. They could not, under any circumstance, assign Jacques to ride with a female officer. He would've had her in the back seat before the end of the shift.

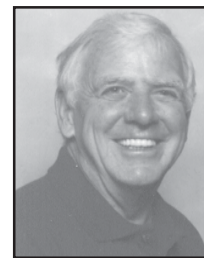
Anyway, I thought it would be nice on his first night of patrol to take him to our finest French restaurant. As I pulled up in front, Jacques looked disappointed. "Is there a problem?" I asked.

He shook his head, "I don't want to seem ungrateful, Monsieur Fred, but my research has taught me that American French restaurants are....how do you say....ca ca."

"Do you have a preference?" I asked. He smiled that smile that usually got ladies to lie on their backs for him and said, "Do you have Royal Castle?"

We decided to eat al fresco. After shooing several winos off the picnic tables, Jacques and I sat down next to the garbage dumpster to a gourmet feast of greasy burgers and frosted mugs of root beer.

"This is what makes America great,"



Fred Wooldridge

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askfredanything@aol.com

Jacques said, shoving his fifth burger into his mouth. "I understand my counterpart, Gibson, I think you called him, was born in New Orleans. I have questions about your famous New Orleans. How did the United States ever convince France to build a city five feet below sea level, surrounded by water on all sides, right in the middle of hurricane territory and then

fill it with Democrats? Rumors in Paris say it was a Republican conspiracy."

Red flags went off in my head and I remembered we were told not to talk politics with our trainee. So I changed the subject and decided to ask Jacques a mundane question. "You seem to be preoccupied with our American ladies. Are you aware that one of our most famous forefathers, scoundrel Ben Franklin, also had an eye for French ladies?"

Well, I'm sorry I asked that question. Jacques stood up in a rage and shouted, "Ce me fait chier." He continued spewing French words that I'm sure, if translated, couldn't be put in this newspaper but every other word was "Merde." When he realized he was cursing and ranting, he tried to regain his composure. He sat down, cleared his throat and said, "If it were not for France and its beautiful women, there would be no America and you would still be kissing the king's ring. You only became America with France's help. And furthermore...."

Just then, a call came over the radio of a car chase in progress. Thank God! We jumped in our car and roared off to join the chase. In route, with siren and police radio blaring, I could still hear Jacques ranting. "Don't forget where the Statute of Liberty came from. That was our gift to you and what have you given France in return, a bunch of insulting jokes?"

I was in a panic on how to calm him down. As a last ditch effort, I said, "My li'l missus is half French....and pretty. Would you like to meet her later?" Jacques was a perfect gentleman the rest of the evening.

PS - This might be a little exaggerated....except the part about the li'l missus being pretty and half French. And, please, don't send French jokes 'cause I know them all.

Look for *The Scam*, coming soon in the Highlands Newspaper

• THE VIEW FROM HERE •

Our past has come to haunt

Last week, I watched with interest the first signs that the old order was unraveling in the Arab world. I thought about predicting the fall of Egypt's Mubarak; then advised you to hoard unused prescription drugs instead. Sometimes you win. Sometimes you lose.

No one knows how the current drama will end, but it seems a certainty that Mubarak is through. His response to growing unrest has been laughable. Like a football coach under intense pressure, he has fed assistants to the restive mobs. First he dissolved the government, exempting himself from ouster. Then he appointed a vice president, the first in his 30-year reign. Secretary of State Clinton applauded the appointment as a move toward democratization. Naming a vice president after 30 years in office, and under intense pressure, makes one wonder how distant real reform might be.

Egyptians are tired of poverty, exhausted by unemployment, and repulsed by governmental corruption. They want change, and they want it sooner rather than later. Mubarak is facing a tidal wave. His attempts to defend his position against the growing menace amount to little more than erecting beach umbrellas and sand castles against a tsunami. He apparently thinks, if he can hold on long enough, the crowds will lose interest and go home; home to repression, home to joblessness, home to poverty and a future without hope. This crowd will not be easily dispersed.

Only if he orders the Army to quell the uprising, does he have a chance to retain his hold on power. And there is a very real chance that if he does order military action, the Army may refuse to fire on their countrymen. If the Army killed enough demonstrators to break the opposition, the United States would find it difficult to continue supporting his regime. Without economic and military aid to prop up his government, it would surely fall. The days of his autocratic reign are at an end. The mobs will not settle for scraps; discarded ministers and promises of open elections. To the newly energized Egyptians, Mubarak is a symbol of all that is wrong. Only a new beginning, with a



Dr. Henry Salzarulo

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email:
hsalzarulo@aol.com

clean slate, and without Mubarak will satisfy them.

The direction of a new Egypt is uncertain. If Islamists are able to grasp the reins of government, the revolution will fail to achieve its goals of freedom and prosperity. The country will find itself under the tyranny of religious zealots instead of repression by a military dictator. Egypt's relationship with Israel will change regardless of the shape of a new Egyptian government.

The vast majority of Egyptians dislike America and our position on the Israeli Palestinian problem is the principal reason. The current peaceful relationship between Egypt and Israel is certain to change in a way that will further destabilize the area.

As I sit in front of the television watching thousands of Egyptians fill the streets in search of blessings we have enjoyed for more than 300 years in this country, I cannot help sharing their pride. I admire the Tunisian who set himself ablaze, the first Egyptian who took to the streets and the thousands who followed. We understand and applaud the pride which Egyptians feel today, eager to shape and share in the future of their country. And yet we fear the unknown future with good reason. There is little we can do but watch events unfold.

We've meddled before. We installed the Shah in Iran. We created South Viet Nam after the French withdrew from Indochina. We invaded Iraq and Afghanistan. Our intrusions have cost hundreds of thousands of lives and billions of dollars. We can't send in a few CIA operatives to change the direction of this movement. We are as powerless to divert this tsunami as Mubarak himself.

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• CONSERVATIVE POV •

The plot thickens....

In the interest of full disclosure, WorldNetDaily is described by Wikipedia as follows: "WorldNet Daily is an American website that publishes news and associated content from a U. S. Conservative perspective. It was founded in May 1997 by Joseph Farah with the stated intentions of 'exposing wrongdoing, corruption and abuse of power' and is headquartered in Washington, DC."

I point this out since WND is the source of much of what follows. Since Obama first was mentioned as a potential presidential candidate years ago, there has been a smoldering question – is Obama constitutionally eligible for the presidency? I've given the subject minimal attention because there seemed not to be enough proof that the question merited pursuing.

For those of you who have ignored the

matter, let me provide some background. How can it be that Obama has never been asked to prove his eligibility? Farah contends that he has never been asked to do so. There seems to be a reasonable argument to that effect. Somewhere in the vetting process, one would assume that he was asked to prove his age, his place of birth and whatever other constitutional requirements are involved. Well, if that were the case, why not just haul out the proof presented at the time and end the intrigue? Hasn't been done that I can find.

"The Senate never investigated Obama, so his qualification has never been certified."

Here's what has been done. "When Obama's eligibility became an issue in June, 2008, the Obama campaign did produce a document known as a

Certification of Live Birth, or COLB – not a standard long-form birth certificate – a proof of his U. S. birth. Critics quickly pointed out serious doubt on whether the document proves he was born in the United States. Obama's failure to show clearly his U.S. birth and the disclosure of serious anomalies regarding his background and identity, have led to widespread public rejection of his account of his origins."

"If Obama were, in fact born in the United States, he could quickly and easily prove it by producing his original 1961 birth records."

Is there really a valid question here, or is it the wishful thinking of a few far-out conspirators? "In a June 2010 poll by *60 Minutes/Vanity Fair*, only 39 percent of Americans said they believe Obama was born in Hawaii as he claims.

An April 2010 CBS/*New York Times* poll found only 58 percent believe he was born in the United States.

A May 2010 WorldNetDaily/Wenzel poll found 55 percent of Americans want Obama to release all records relating to his childhood and education, and 52 percent suspect he's hiding something by refusing to release his documentation. More than 500,000 people have signed a petition demanding that Obama prove he was born in the United States."

The validity of Obama's COLB itself has been brought into question. Some experts claim that it is not authentic and contains paste-ups, forgeries and other inconsistencies that cast doubt on its credibility.

Getting beyond the birth document issue, according to WND: "For a man who says he was born in Honolulu, Obama has a surprising number of people, including the Kenyan ambassador to the United States, who believe he was actually born in Kenya.

Numerous African newspapers have described him as Kenyan-born. His wife, Michelle has twice implied publicly that he is a native of Kenya. Most famously, his step-grandmother has stated she was present at his birth in Mombasa, Kenya.

It's impossible to verify these statements with a contemporary birth certificate because the Kenyan government has reportedly sealed all files related to Obama."

OK, time for a pop quiz. Neil



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

Abercrombie is a. one of the founders of Abercrombie & Fitch; b. the first man to walk on the moon; or c. the Governor of Hawaii. That's right, he's the Gov.

From the Hawaii Reporter: "The new Democratic head of the state vowed when he took office that he would do his best to end the debate over Obama's birth, which began in 2008 during the presidential

campaign.

Abercrombie has utterly failed in his mission to prove that Obama was born in the United States. To state that 'officials have tracked down papers indicating that President Obama was indeed born in Hawaii' falls woefully short of proving that Obama is a citizen of the United States. To claim that 'our investigation indicates there is a recording of his birth' doesn't mean a thing."

One has every reason to remain suspicious.

Rush Limbaugh thinks the administration might be setting "birthers" (those who doubt Obama's US birth) up for a major surprise before the 2012 elections. He questions why Abercrombie would insert himself into the fracas without having ironclad proof, which it appears he does not have. According to Wikipedia, Abercrombie "attended classes (at U of Hawaii at Manoa) with, and befriended current U.S. President Barack Obama's parents, Ann Dunham and Barack Obama, Sr."

Limbaugh allows for the possibility that Abercrombie may have entered the fray to keep the pot boiling so the question doesn't go entirely away. He doesn't know what to think and neither do I. I do know a lot of money and effort is being spent to defend Obama' qualifications and a lot of money and effort is likewise being spent on proving his lack of qualification.

While time will tell the truth of the matter, we are left to speculate for now. If Obama is proven be ineligible to serve as president, the validity of every presidential appointment, every directive and every bill he signed into law would come into question. Every legal case decided by an Obama-appointed judge could be reopened. He could be removed from office and face extensive criminal charges for perpetrating the greatest fraud in American history.

Stay tuned.

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• JUST HERS •

Us and them, Part I

Life is an odd business. We spend much of our lives with our noses pressed against the window – either looking out, or looking in. If we're on the outer fringes of society, we want to be part of the inner circle. Once we're there, we not only want to stay there, but we want to make sure that only the right people are allowed to join us.

It's sad to see how certain issues are dividing Highlands, and pitting people against each other. Whether it's the proposed new post office or the running battle over how to deal with the local bear population, emotions are running high. It all boils down to "us and them." Each side feels it holds the moral high ground, and no one is prepared to budge an inch. What's sad is that normally nice, kind people become downright hateful. One of the joys of living in a small town is that when the chips are down, people are supposed to forget their differences, and pull together as a community. Any issue that spoils that harmony is a danger not only to the town in general, but to each and every individual.

John's grandparents, the Henleys, bought their summer home in the early 1920s, so there was a family tradition of living in Highlands. Still, they weren't full timers, until Annie Linn built her cozy house "Winter Storage," and moved in for good. Having spent every winter here since I moved down from New York has introduced me to that exclusive and hearty band of people called "the year 'rounders." And, yes, I confess we do feel superior to those folks who wimp out, and head for the sunnier climates of Florida and other points south.

I lived in New York for 11 years, but seldom heard the terms "frozen pipes," "frozen pumps," and "winterize" until I moved below the Mason-Dixon Line. Winter in Highlands is an adventure in itself, as sturdy souls meet at the post office or the local grocery store, swapping stories about how many days they were snowed in before they were able to limp into town. I remember the occasion several weeks ago when I pulled on my tall rubber boots, and trudged to the closest convenience store for supplies. Folks were buying the essentials – bread, milk, and eggs. Some friends spotted me with my shopping cart. "Hey, there! Whatcha buyin'?" I pulled my scarf tighter around my face in embarrassment. "I cooking," I whispered. "And I realized I'd run out of fresh mushrooms for beef Stroganoff." They smiled indulgently. After all, I had moved here from "up Nawth." They were

prepared to cut me some slack.

The whole "us and them" issue became quite clear to me as a young girl, growing up in Waynesboro, Virginia. In those days, the two big employers were Du Pont and General Electric. The influx of chemical and electrical engineers flooded this once sleepy Southern town with that most dreaded of species – Yankees. It even brought a small band of people who actually dared be born in a country outside the borders of the United States, like my war bride mother. If someone from Upstate New York was a foreigner, then my mother was an actual alien, dropped off by a Parisian UFO. "How come yo Daddy and Mama talk funny?" was a typical comment, as we bit our lips, praying not to be the last kids picked for dodge ball. When I had bragged about the delicious onion soup we'd had for dinner the night before, a high school classmate had sneered, "I would never date a girl who only had soup for dinner!"

In elementary school, I was plucked out of class, and sent to the library with a small group of equally mortified children to rid us of what were called "speech impediments." Upon reflection, they were



Michelle Mead-Armor
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mostly accents which troubled our small town teachers – a French one, in my case. At the end of the school year, our flat voices made us sound like a pack of Midwestern news announcers, perhaps not what the local school authorities were expecting, but still better, in their eyes. But, like the defi-

ant Scots - denied their bagpipes, kilts, and tartans by the English - I would sit by myself on the playground, subversively rolled my "rrrrr's."

Even when we didn't want to rock the boat, we got into trouble. Our next door neighbors, the Lucks, were Conservative Christians, and never hesitated to comment on every aspect of our lives. We shouldn't drink alcohol. Daddy shouldn't mow the lawn on Sunday, shirtless, and in shorts. Whenever Earle, their son, and I played Yankee and Rebel, Earle always had to win, or he'd lose his temper and beat me up. Most importantly, Maman should hang her underwear to dry on the clothesline inside a pillowcase – a particularly puzzling suggestion which astonished us. I suppose the sight of a lady's unmentionables floating in the breeze was enough to drive Mr. Luck to dancing or card playing, two other

"no-no's" high on the Luck's long list of sinful behavior.

One evening, after celebrating a birthday, we realized that we had three empty bottles – Dubonnet, red wine, and champagne. Maman and I planned our disposal of said bottles with the tactical precision of commandos. We waited until dusk, and crept down the lawn to the garbage cans - trash and bottles in hand. Just as we were stashing the bottles underneath the garbage, Mrs. Luck sprang out of the boxwoods like a biblical prophet turned jack-in-the-box. "Ah'm sorry to see that y'all are keepin' Jesus from yo house!" she shrieked, pointing her finger at the offending bottles.

Unrepentant, Maman turned, and addressed her with great dignity. "What do you think Christ drank at the Last Supper?" she said. "Coca Cola?"

• About the Author: Michelle A. Mead-Armor is a writer and translator who grew up in Waynesboro, Virginia, before wasting her youth and good looks in Baltimore, Sydney, Paris, and New York. She moved to Highlands several years ago to live on top of a mountain on the Continental divide near Highlands with her precious late husband, author and attorney, John C. Armor, and two very spoiled cats. Michelle is happy to provide you with her recipe for beef Stroganoff, although she hopes you wash it down with a nice glass of wine, not Coca Cola.

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• COACH'S CORNER •

Super Bowl Preview

Two of the most storied franchises in NFL history will collide on Sunday in what shapes up to be a terrific match-up for Super Bowl XLV. (Side note, even though I consider myself proficient in Roman numerals, I still had to look up that this was Super Bowl number 45) As usual, I will now attempt to argue both sides of

who will actually win Super Bowl XLV while being too afraid to make an actual prediction.

Three reasons the Green Bay Packers will win

1) Maurkice Pouncey's injury will have a negative effect on the running game of the Pittsburgh Steelers. Pouncey, a Pro Bowl center for the Steelers, has a severe ankle injury and will likely be inactive at the Super Bowl. Last season, Indianapolis Colts defensive end Dwight Freeney had a similar ankle injury and was ineffective for the majority of the game despite playing.

2) Turnovers have been a saving grace for the Green Bay defense as of late, as they have registered 16 takeaways in their last 8 games. Last season, the New Orleans Saints led the league in takeaways, and their defense came up with a huge one late



Ryan Potts
tryanpotts@hotmail.com

in the Super Bowl to seal the victory.

3) Aaron Rodgers is playing about as well as any quarterback on the planet. Rodgers has a fantastic receiving corps that includes Pro Bowl WR Greg Jennings and veteran receiver Donald Driver.

Three reasons the Pittsburgh Steelers will win

1) These Steelers have been here before. Just two years ago the Steelers defeated the Arizona Cardinals to win the Super Bowl, and the core of that team has remained intact with guys like James Harrison, Troy Polamalu and Hines Ward. Coach Mike Tomlin was the youngest coach to win a Super Bowl, and is in position to establish himself as the top coach in the NFL will 2 Super Bowls in 3 years.

2) The Steeler defense, led by James Harrison and Troy Polamalu will be up to

the challenge of facing Green Bay. Pittsburgh is no slouch in the turnover department, but they specialize in stopping the run and making their opponent one dimensional. Additionally, the Steelers have some very complex defensive schemes, and it was a zone blitz two years ago that saw Harrison intercept Kurt Warner in the end zone and take it to the house and change the face of that game completely.

3) Ben Roethlisberger is a great quarterback. Say what you want about him as a person (and believe me, I think the guy is a class A toolbag) but he has proven himself to be the best in the league at extending a play and making something happen in big time situations. Even if Green Bay is able to put great pressure on Roethlisberger, there is no guarantee that they will be able to bring him down without giving up a big play.

OK, so I lied... I think I will go out on a limb and make a big prediction here. I'm going 27-24 Packers in a nailbiter.

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• HIGHLANDS SCHOOL BASKETBALL •

Highlanders sweep Nantahala

By Ryan Potts

The varsity basketball Highlanders and Lady Highlanders traveled to Topton on Saturday night to face the Nantahala Hawks in an important conference matchup for both teams.

The Lady Highlanders jumped out early on the Lady Hawks, using pressure defense to create turnovers and build an impressive 20-2 lead at the end of the first quarter. The Lady Highlanders would not let up from there, continuing to shuttle players in and out to wear down a Nantahala team that was only playing with 5 players due to injuries and suspensions. Marlee McCall and Emily Munger led Highlands with 14 points each in the 55-26 victory.

The Highlander men came out looking to snap a 6 game losing streak to Nantahala. The game was close early, as the Hawks play extremely well at home, but the Highlanders were able to use a triangle and two defense to stifle Nantahala's star players and take the home crowd out of the game. A 21-4 run in the third quarter broke the game open for the Highlanders, who got strong performances from seniors Michael Shearl, Josh Delacruz and Clayton Lassiter. Shearl scored 21 for Highlands, while Delacruz added 15 points and 14 rebounds. Lassiter pulled down 13 strong rebounds for Highlands.

The Highlanders will host Nantahala

Friday evening in what will be Senior Night for the Highlands student-athletes. Please come out and attend as we honor our seniors and play what will be a pivotal conference matchup for both squads.

Stephanie Smart at the Nantahala game.

Photo by Noel Atherton



• HEALTH MATTERS •

A healthy mouth equals healthy lungs

By Dr. Joseph Wilbanks

According to a study published in the Journal of Periodontology maintaining healthy gums can also help you keep your lungs healthy. The new study suggested that having periodontal disease (gum disease) can increase your risk for respiratory infections, including pneumonia and COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease).

The study looked at 200 patients. Half of the participants were hospitalized with one of several types of respiratory disease and the other half were healthy. Each participant was given a complete oral evaluation to measure their oral health.

The patients with respiratory disease had worse periodontal health than the healthy group which suggests a relationship between gum disease and respiratory disease. The re-



searchers suspect that the presence of oral bacteria in the mouths of patients with periodontal disease may increase the chances of developing respiratory diseases. The study does note that more studies are needed to form a more conclusive link.

"This study provides yet another example of how periodontal

health plays a role in keeping other systems of the body healthy" said Dr. Donald S. Clem, President of the American Academy of Periodontology. Dr. Clem also stressed the importance of home care in helping to prevent periodontal disease. "Taking good care of your periodontal health involves daily tooth brushing and flossing." Regular visits with your dentist and dental hygienist are a key part of maintaining healthy gums and teeth.

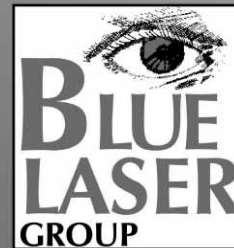
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Program to reduce childhood obesity launches in eight child care centers and communities

Smart Start announces first round of counties to implement Shape NC

Smart Start, the state's award-winning early childhood initiative, has announced the first eight communities selected to implement Shape NC: Healthy Starts for Young Children. Shape NC is a groundbreaking initiative that tackles the childhood obesity epidemic by focusing on young children, from birth through age five, in child care and community settings. The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation has partnered with The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc (NCPC), the organization that oversees Smart Start, to invest \$3 million for 30 Smart Start partnerships to administer Shape NC over three years.

The first eight partnerships to launch Shape NC include: Buncombe County Partnership for Children, Inc., Down East Partnership for Children, Guilford County Partnership for Children, Inc., Onslow County Partnership for Children, Inc., Orange County Partnership for Young Children, Randolph County Partnership for Children, Region A Partnership for Children (serving Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Macon, and Swain counties as well as the Cherokee Indian Reservation) and Smart Start of New Hanover County.

More than 31% of North Carolina's children ages 2 to 4 are considered at risk for becoming overweight or are currently overweight. Shape NC seeks to create a replica-

ble, sustainable statewide early childhood •See OBESITY page 13

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Ongoing

- At Health Tracks at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, various exercise classes all week long. Call 828-526-1FIT.

Mon. & Thurs.

- On the Mat Yoga at the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation on Main Street. Upper Level Jones Hall. Mon., and Thurs. at 10:45 a.m. Bring your mat. 828-482-2128. \$10/hour. (12/31)

Mon., Wed., Fri.

- Heart Healthy Exercise Class at the Rec Park. 8:30-9:30 a.m. \$20/month.
- Step Aerobics with Tina Rogers at the Rec Park, 8-9 a.m. \$10 per class or \$50 a month.

Mondays

- Closed AA meeting, 5:30 p.m. at the Episcopal Church at Fifth and Main streets.

Tuesdays

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

- Closed AA Women's meeting, 5:30 p.m. at the Episcopal Church at Fifth and Main streets.

Tuesdays, through Feb. 22

- At The Bascom, "Tuesday After School Art," 3:15-4:30 pm. After school art for elementary aged students. Lessons include drawing, painting, modeling and collage. Kindergarten through sixth grade. \$30 for a six-week session. To register or for more information, visit www.thebascom.org or call 828.526.4949, ext. 100.

Tues. & Thurs.

- Study Hall at the Literacy Council of Highlands in the Peggy Crosby Center from 3 to 5 p.m. Come do your homework, projects use the resources on site

and get help from a tutor. For more information, contact Faviola Olvera at (828) 526-0925.

Wednesdays

- The Highlands Mountaintop Rotary meets at 7:30 a.m. in the dining room at the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Enter the hospital in the main or emergency entrance and follow the signs downstairs. Visitors are welcome. Meetings end at 8:30 am.

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

- The Homegrown Buds, a homeschool 4-H club, meets at noon at the Macon County Library on Siler Road in Franklin at 1 p.m.

Wednesdays & Fridays

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

Every 3rd 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. Call 828-524-6777 or 706-746-9964.

Thursdays

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

Thursdays through March 10

- At The Bascom, "Paint Like a Master," 3:15-5 pm. After school art classes for middle and high school students. Each class will introduce a different artist and painting technique. Students will complete paintings in various artist's styles. The students' own style will be explored for the final painting. Class size is limited, pre-registration is required. Sixth through twelfth grade. \$80 for an eight-week session. To register or for more information, visit www.thebascom.org or call 828.526.4949, ext. 100.

Fridays through Feb. 18

- At The Bascom, "Pre School Creativity Classes," instructor Katy Calloway, 9:30-10:30 am. The very young, joined by a parent, will learn basic art skills to support personal creativity. Lessons will include scribbling, cutting, joining, modeling and painting. Ages 2.5-5. Class size is limited, pre-registration is required. \$30 for a six-week session. To register or for more information, visit www.thebascom.org or call 828.526.4949, ext. 100.

Fridays through May 27

- At The Bascom, "Highlands High School Ceramics," 8-9:30 am. Ceramics for high school age students desiring to learn the art of ceramics. The curriculum follows NC state guidelines and develops valuable skills. Free. To register contact Highlands School, 828.526.2147.

Every Third Saturday

- The Highlands Memorial Post #370 of the American Legion meets at the Shortoff Baptist Church. Breakfast is at 9 am. Meeting is at 10 a.m. All veterans are invited to attend.

Last Sat. of the month through May 28

- At The Bascom, "Friends Around the Globe," 1-3 pm. Fun, creative, educational activities to build skills through the visual arts. Lessons will include a variety of media including drawing, painting, clay and other media. A collaboration with the International Friendship Center. Free. To register or for more information, visit www.thebascom.org or call 828.526.4949, ext. 100.

Saturdays

- At Paoletti's Restaurant, intimate Wine Tasting at the bar at 1 pm. Great inexpensive wines from around the world, available for retail sales daily. Cheese and Crackers are served. Cost: \$20 per person refundable with case purchase.

- At Cyprus International Restaurant, live music beginning at 9 p.m. No cover.

Friday, Feb. 4

- American Red Cross Blood Drive at Lowe's of Franklin, Georgia Highway, Franklin, 9:30 am to 2 pm. Please call 349-4654 for more information or to schedule an appointment. Walk-Ins Welcome, appointments preferred! Donors are encouraged to donate as soon as weather and travel conditions permit. There is a special need for type O and type B blood donors. All presenting donors have a chance to win one of two pairs of Delta Air Lines tickets!

Friday, Feb. 4

- The High Mountain Squares will dance this Friday night at the Macon County Community Building on Route 441 South from 6:30 to 9 PM. Ricky Simpson from Martin, GA will be the caller. We dance Western Style Square Dancing, main/stream and plus levels. There will be a Plus Workshop from 6:30 to 7. Everyone is welcome. For more information call 828-349-0905, 828-369-8344, 706-782-0943.

Saturday, Feb. 5

- At The Bascom Art Cinema in the Loft Gallery at 2 pm, Frank Lloyd Wright 2. Frank Lloyd Wright was the greatest of all American architects, a man who believed he was destined to redesign the world, creating everything anew. His architectural achievements were often overshadowed by the turbulence of his melodramatic life. This riveting film brings Wright's unforgettable story to life.

Sunday, Feb. 6

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 1-mile hike in Black Rock Mt. State Park in GA on an easy loop trail around Taylor Lake plus a visit to the overlook above Clayton. Bring water, a snack if you wish; wear sturdy shoes. Meet at Smoky Mountains Visitors' Center in Otto at 2 pm; drive 26 miles round trip. Call leader Kay Coriell at 369-6820 for reservations or alternate meeting place if coming from Highlands, Cashiers, or Clayton. Visitors and children ten or older are welcome but no pets please.

Tuesday, Feb 8

- At The Highlands Dialogue's Tuesday discussion, Karen Hawk: "The Burqa: Anti Slavery or Pro-Choice?" article from Sept/Oct 2010 The Humanist — handout. Handouts will be available at the meeting previous to the discussion (if not sooner) and at the Hudson Library in the Community Box available during library hours. The Highlands Dialogue's Tuesday discussions are held at the Civic Center from 10-11:30 a.m. For more information about the Highlands Dialogue or any of our upcoming discussions, please e-mail John Gaston johngaston@aol.com or Karen Hawk hwkncrw@earthlink.net.

Wednesday, Feb. 9

- America's Oldest Flour Company Teaches Macon County Students to Bake, Give Back to the Community. The King Arthur Flour Company of Norwich, Vt., will visit Highlands School at 9 a.m., to teach fourth- to seventh-grade students to bake fresh,

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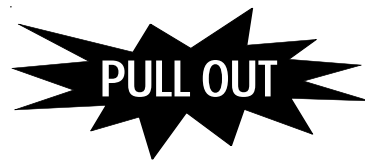
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On going and Upcoming Events

nutritious bread from scratch through its Life Skills Bread Baking Program. Students will then use their newfound skill – along with ingredients donated by King Arthur Flour – to bake their own loaves for donation to CareNet in Franklin, N.C.

Friday, Feb. 11

• Valentine's Dinner and Dance, 6-9 p.m. at Highlands Country Club's Hudson House. Line Dance and Swing Dance Lessons after dinner. All ages welcome. Buy tickets early or buy that night! Children \$5, Adults \$10. Call 787-1958 for info.

Saturday, Feb. 12

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 4.6 mile hike, with an elevation change of 1,000 feet, on the Appalachian Trail from Long Branch to Glassmine Gap to Rock Gap in the Standing Indian Area. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin (opposite Burger King) at 10AM; drive 25 miles round trip. Bring water, lunch; wear sturdy shoes. Call leaders Bill & Sharon Van Horn at 369-1983 for reservations. Visitors are welcome but no pets please.

• At The Bascom Art Cinema in the Loft Gallery at 2 pm, Art & Copy, Inside Advertising's Creative Revolution

Meet the inspiring cultural visionaries who revolutionized advertising during the industry's golden age in the 1960s by creating slogans to live by and ads we all remember. From the introduction of the Volkswagen to America to the triumph of Apple Computers, *Art & Copy* explores the most successful and influential advertising campaigns of the 20th century.

Tuesday, Feb. 15

An American Red Cross **Adult CPR/AED and Child CPR/AED + Infant CPR** course will be conducted by the Macon County Public Health Center, Tuesday from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 pm at the Macon County Public Health Center at 1830 Lakeside Drive. **Participants must pre-register and pre-pay at the Macon County Public Health Center before Monday, February 14, 2011.** For more information on class fees, please call Jennifer at 349-2439.

Feb. 19-April 2

• At The Bascom, view Regional Art Leagues annual exhibition. Call 526-4949 for more information.

Saturday, Feb. 19

• Chess and Checkers Challenge at the Rec Park 1-4 p.m. Come support Highlands School's 5th Grade Class. The class is earning money for its annual 5th grade trip to Charleston, SC. "Can you beat a 5th grader?" Sign up early to reserve your game! \$20 entree fee (plus \$5 if you lose!) Call 787-1958 for info.

• Birdhouse Auction and Final Bidding/Silent Auction at the Rec Park. Personally designed and decorated, these bird houses are on display now at local banks. Bid now at silent auctions.

• At The Bascom Art Cinema in the Loft Gallery at 2 pm, *Cathedral*. Author David Macaulay hosts an hour of spectacular location sequences and cinema-quality animation celebrating France's most famous cathedrals. *Cathedral* tells tales from the period, revealing fascinating stories of life and death, faith and despair, prosperity and intrigue.

Sunday, Feb. 20

• At the Episcopal Church, "Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier, BK1 (1-12)" at 2 p.m. featuring pianist Robert Henry. Donations accepted.

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 1.2 mile hike on Lakeside Dr. walking trail in Franklin. Meet at Macon Co. Health Center on Lakeside Dr. at 2 pm. No driving from here. Bring water, a snack if you wish; wear sturdy shoes. Call leader Kay Coriell at 369-6820 for reservations. Visitors and children ten and older are welcome but no pets please.

Tuesday, Feb 22

• At The Highlands Dialogue's Tuesday discussion, Peter Ray: Doonesbury: A 40 Year Retrospec-

tive. Handouts will be available at the meeting previous to the discussion (if not sooner) and at the Hudson Library in the Community Box available during library hours. The Highlands Dialogue's Tuesday discussions are held at the Civic Center from 10-11:30 a.m. For more information about the Highlands Dialogue or any of our upcoming discussions, please e-mail John Gaston john.gaston@aol.com or Karen Hawk hwkncrw@earthlink.net.

Thurs.-Sun, Feb. 24-27

• The Highlands-Cashiers Players present "You Know I Can't Hear You When The Water's Running," at the Martin-Lipscomb Performing Arts Center at 7:30 p.m. and 2:30 on Sunday. Call 526-4121 for tickets.

HCP's "I Can't Hear You ..." set to open Thurs., Feb. 24



Highlands Cashiers Players upcoming production of "You know I Can't Hear You When The Water's Running," by Robert Anderson, is in full swing, under the watchful eyes of the directors, and that's directors as in plural. It's a different kind of play and therefore requires a different kind of direction.

The play is actually a collection of four vignettes, separate stories that are connected thematically, so each of the four scenes has a separate director, working with the supervision of Production Coordinator, Donna Cochran. These seemingly unrelated stories have more common then they may seem at first, as each segment uses both comedy and genuine drama to address what happens when two people encounter difficult circumstances and bring their differing opinions along with them.

All four directors bring a wide array of talents as they tell their specific tales, starting with director Kathryn Cochran's vision for "Shock of Recognition," a very funny piece where an earnest playwright and his agent discuss just how much exposure to art an audience can stand before a play be-

comes too risqué. Mary Adair Leslie's piece, "Footsteps Of Doves," uses much gentler humor in a scene where a couple address whether or not to purchase twin beds after 25 years of marriage and what risks that may ensue. Donna Cochran gives us "I'll be Home For Christmas," as two parents discuss how much dialog they want to have with their soon-to-be-adult children about love, intimacy, and respect, sometimes using jokes and sarcasm to hide much deeper feelings. Finally, Annette Coleman brings us "I'm Herbert," a clever, cute and funny piece about memory, love, longevity, and gentle accommodation.

These very talented and experienced directors will be bring both laughter and tears to the stage, all the more genuine because they have created characters you will recognize as some one you know, or just maybe some one you are.

The curtain goes up Feb 24 at the Martin Lipscomb performing Arts Center, on Chestnut Street in Highlands, NC, it will be a show to remember! Feb 24-27, March 4-6, Box office number is (828) 526-4121.

Highlands Annual Chili Cook Off...Western Style!

We might be singing Frank Loesser's 'Baby It's Cold Outside' for at least another month, but on March 12th, it's gonna be burnin' up on the mountain and you don't want to miss out on the heat!

Every year around this time the Highlands Chamber of Commerce organizes a chili cook off and each year is a little different from the previous one. Last year, the competition was a Cajun cook off. This year, the theme is 'Western' all the way, from the décor right down to the attire and you are all invited to get out your boots, bandanas, hats and any other western paraphernalia that you may have accumulated over the years (or not) and come to the Highlands Community Building at 6:30 pm for a toe tappin' good time!

If you would like to enter the event as a competitor and fire up your best chili recipe, bake your best batch of cornbread ever or perfect the family's secret salsa recipe, all you have to do is contact Jan Healey one of three ways: by phone at (828) 526-5841,



email her at visitor@highlandschamber.org or fax in your request at (828) 526-5803. A little tip for you cowgirls and cowboys out there, don't wait too long to enter, space is limited and it is filling up fast!

For you chili-lovers who would rather eat than cook, tickets will be sold at the door, \$20 per

person (doors open at 6:30 pm) and children 12 and under get in FREE. Soft drinks, beer and wine will be served to help cleanse your palate and put out the fire. But that's not all, YOU will decide the winners of the evening's competition. Yes, YOU will vote for your 'favorite chili,' 'hottest chili' AND 'most unusual.' But the fun doesn't stop there. Mike Murphy will provide the mood music for the evening, so you can be sure there will be dancin' and we'll bet even some singin' going on!

(This event is sponsored by the Mountain Laurel)

• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

Solve problems face to face



Pastor Paul Christy
Highlands United Methodist
Church

As I write to you this week, I have just returned from a mission trip to Haiti, and let me say that it is good to be home, but I have fallen in love with that country. This is my third trip to Haiti, and my church folks are, I am sure, tired of hearing my stories from Haiti, but I'll ask that you hang on with me as I tell you of an experience from my last trip.

We were there to take school supplies, medical supplies, and some funds to continue to build the two houses we began in the spring of 2010. That was our purpose, but while we were there we also met some fellows from Virginia Tech who were building a bridge across the river for a school and church on a little island. During the rainy season, the folks on the island are basically shut out from town because the river gets so high that no one can cross. Right now you can wade in the river to get from one side to the other, but during the rainy season, there is not much hope to cross, even in a boat.

Anyway, we met two engineering students who as part of their Senior Project, were building a foot bridge across the river. Now when I say a foot bridge, I mean one of the nicest and fanciest foot bridges I had ever seen. They had cables, concrete, and lots of wood for the cross boards on the bridge and if you know any engineers you know that they do everything to perfection. And this bridge was no exception. They told about the height and weight variables and I pretended to know what they were talking about but to this day still have no clue!

They were nice guys and the Haitian folks really seemed to like these two engineering students and yes the bridge was impressive. But what was amazing was that we were there for a town meeting after lunch when all the workers were to get paid. Every worker had an envelope with his/her name on it, and every worker had agreed to a specific wage, shook hands, and this was pay day for the first week of work.

The mayor of the village said a few words and he talked about the bigger picture and how one little bridge would unite the people of the island with the people of the town. It was inspiring from what our interpreter told us, and then he called each person up individually and handed him/her the envelope with their salary in it.

The very first person to receive his money opened it up and counted each dollar and seemed dissatisfied. But he patiently waited until all 30 envelopes were given and then went to talk to the mayor. They talked a while and it was decided that he had been paid correctly and everything was all right.

Now why do I tell that seemingly insignificant story? Because what impressed me about that impromptu town payroll meeting was the way conflict was resolved. The two men talked about the disagreement and they did it face to face, and the conflict was resolved. How many times have

• See SPIRITUALLY page 18

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

BLUE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

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

BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

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

CHAPEL OF SKY VALLEY

Sky Valley, GA

Church: 706-746-2999

Pastor's residence: 706-746-5770

Sundays: 10 a.m. – Worship

Holy Communion 1st Sunday of the month

Wednesdays: 9 a.m. Healing and Prayer with Holy
Communion each service

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

OF LATTER DAY SAINTS

NC 28 N. and Pine Ridge Rd., (828) 369-8329

Rai Cammack, Branch President, (828) 369-1627

CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

Rector: Jim Murphy, 252-671-4011

Worshipping at the facilities of

Whiteside Presbyterian Church, Cashiers

Sunday: Holy Communion - 9:00 a.m.; Adult Forum -

10:45, Bucks Coffee Cafe, Cashiers

Monday: Bible Study & Supper at members' homes -
6 p.m.

Wednesday: Men's Bible Study -8:30 a.m., First
Baptist Church

Thursday: Women's Prayer Group - 10 a.m.,
Whiteside Presbyterian Church; Healing Service at
noon

CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Everett Brewer

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

Prayer – 6:30 p.m.

Evening Service – 1st & 3rd Sunday – 7 p.m.

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685

3645 Cashiers Rd, Highlands, NC

Senior Pastor Gary Hewins

Sun.: 9:30 am: Adult Sunday School

10:30 am: Middle School; 10:45 am: Children's

Program., Worship Service. 12:30 pm Student Arts

Group, 5 p.m. High School

Wed.: 6pm: CBC University Program

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

526-2968

Reverend Denson Franklin

Sunday: Breakfast; 9 A.M. - Sunday School

10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist (Rite II)

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

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

4:30 P.M. Education for Ministry

Wednesday: 6:30 P.M. Choir Practice

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

10:30 a.m. Daughters of the King

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Dr. Charles Harris, Pastor • 526-4153

Sun.: Worship 10:45 a.m., ; School – 9:30 a.m.;

Wednesdays: Prayer Meeting - 6:15 p.m., Choir –
7:15-8:15 p.m.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Dr. Lee Bowman, Pastor

Dr. Don Mullen, Parish Associate 526-3175

Sun.: Worship – 11 a.m.; Sun. School – 9:30

Mondays: 8 a.m. – Men's Prayer Group & Breakfast
Wednesdays – Choir – 7

HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Sixth Street

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

Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study – 7

HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson

221 N. 4th Street

Sunday: School 9:30 a.m.; Morning Worship 10:45

a.m., Evening Worship, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday: Prayer Service, 6:30 p.m.

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Pastor Paul Christy 526-3376

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

Youth

Wed: Supper; 6; 7:15 – children, youth, & adults
studies; 6:15 – Adult choir (nursery provided for
Wed. p.m. activities)

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

HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH – ELCA

Chaplain Margaret Howell

2152 Dillard Road – 526-9741

Sundays: Sunday School and Adult discussion group

9:30 a.m.; Worship/Communion – 10:30

HEALING SERVICE on the 5th Sunday of the month.

MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH

8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in Satolah

Pastor Matt Shuler, (828) 526-8425

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

Choir – 6 p.m.

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

MOUNTAIN SYNAGOGUE

St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church, Franklin

828-369-9270 or 828-293-5197

MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

Pastor: Clayton Lopez • 828-743-9704

Independent Bible Church

Sundays:10:30 a.m. at Blue Ridge School

Weds: Bible Study 6:30 p.m.; Youth Group 6 p.m.

OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS CATHOLIC CHURCH

Rev. Dean Cesa, pastor

Parish office: 526-2418

Mass: – 9 a.m.: Sun., Thurs. & Fri

Saturday Mass – Mem Day through Oct. at 4 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Clifford Willis

Sundays: School –10 a.m.; Worship –11 a.m. & 7

Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg. – 7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Alfred Sizemore

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 10:45 a.m.;

Evening Worship – 6 p.m.

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

For more information call 526-3212.

SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer.

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

Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study – 7

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

85 Sierra Drive • 828-524-6777

Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.

Child Care - 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Religious Education - 11 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Youth from 8th - 12th grades meet the second

Sunday of each month from 5 - 7:30 p.m

WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Cashiers, Rev. Sam Forrester, 743-2122

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

Carolina Hemlocks in Highlands to be preserved

A newly hired Nantahala National Forest hemlock treatment crew recently completed treating 253 Carolina hemlock trees on the forest's Kelsey tract near Highlands.

The five-person crew chemically treated the hemlocks by soil injection with a systemic insecticide that will protect the trees from the hemlock woolly adelgid for up to five years. The adelgid is a non-native insect pest that is occurring in epidemic numbers throughout the eastern United States and is causing widespread mortality of eastern and Carolina hemlocks.

The Carolina hemlock is a separate species from the much more common eastern hemlock. In contrast to the eastern species, which occurs on rich moist sites, the Carolina hemlock inhabits dry, rocky ridges with shallow soil in the Appalachian Mountains from Georgia to Virginia.

Many of the site locations are in areas with difficult access. The Kelsey tract Carolina hemlocks are considered by many authorities to be one of the best Carolina hemlock stands in the world. These particular trees are located on top of a large granitic dome covered with heavy brush. The stand includes several large trees over 18 inches in diameter, which is unusual for a stand of this species.

Although the Carolina hemlocks have been displaying genetic resistance to the woolly adelgid, they are still susceptible to mortality by the insects. Thus, by treating these trees, they will be preserved for a few years and can be retreated in the future.

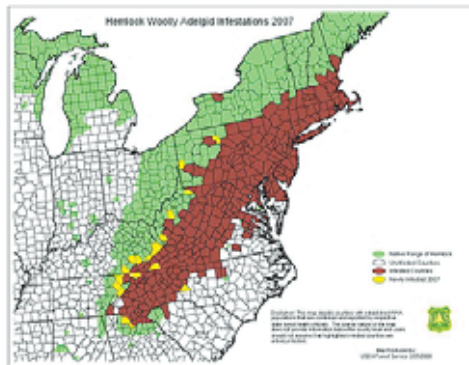
This treatment by the new Nantahala hemlock crew and forthcoming treatments by a Pisgah National Forest crew are part of a renewed effort by the National Forests in North Carolina to treat as many surviving hemlock trees on the Nantahala



A hemlock infested with woolly adelgid.



Hemlock "ghosts" pepper Western North Carolina forests.



The band of woolly adelgid infestation in the Appalachian Mountains and beyond..

and Pisgah National Forests as is practical. North Carolina National Forests Supervisor Marisue Hilliard signed a new Forest decision in August this year detailing these expanded treatment activities on the national forests.

The Forest Service is mapping living stands of hemlocks, both eastern and Carolina, by air and on foot in order to treat the

surviving trees. For more information about NFsNC hemlock conservation, please go to the website: www.fs.usda.gov/nfsnc and search on the keyword "hemlock."

For additional information about the Nantahala Ranger District treatments, contact Joan Brown, District Silviculturist, at 828-524-6441 ext. 426.

USDA Forest Service and partners see some success with hemlock treatments

Hemlock trees in the Southern Appalachians have been under attack by non-native invasive insects, the hemlock woolly adelgid, killing thousands of trees across the landscape. The National Forests in North Carolina and a team of partners recently reported some success in their efforts to protect trees from these tiny killers.

The Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Working Group includes the National Forests in North Carolina, USFS Forest Health Protection, Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition, WildLaw, Western North Carolina Alliance, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, a local arborist, and NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Dave Casey, USFS project lead, convened the group in December and reported on the hiring and accomplishments of two four-person treatment crews, one for the Pisgah and one for the Nantahala National Forest. Josh Kelly of WildLaw, shared that the Carolina hemlock sites he had treated last summer and fall seemed to be doing pretty well. Carolina hemlocks, found on dry rocky ridges, are less common than the

eastern hemlock species that inhabit rich moist sites.

In Fall 2010, the crews focused on the treatment of newly identified hemlock areas as well as expanding existing treatment sites. A current goal for the team is to focus on treating larger contiguous areas of hemlock than the National Forests in North Carolina has done in past years.

Treatments include soil injection of insecticides containing the active ingredients imidacloprid and dinotefuran, both of which have proved effective in reducing HWA populations. Predatory beetles have been released in several areas across the two national forests, with additional species of beetles studied as options by partner researchers and universities. An HWA killing fungus applied through aerial spray is also under consideration.

For more information about these hemlock conservation efforts, visit the forest website: www.fs.usda.gov/nfsnc and search on the keyword "hemlock". For additional information call Dave Casey, Project Lead, at 828-837-5152 ext. 110.

4-H Plant Sale

Consider purchasing fruit-bearing plants to landscape your property this year!

Macon County 4-H is taking orders for raspberry, blueberry, blackberry, and strawberry plants, grape vine, and pear, cherry, peach, plum, and apple trees. These plants are bare root, except for blueberries and blackberries, and come directly from the nursery.

Place your orders prior to Feb. 17 to receive what you will need for your garden. Contact Cooperative Extension - 4-H at 349-2046 or stop by the Agricultural Services Center at 193 Thomas Heights Road in Franklin. Pick-up dates will be March 2 and 3.

Macon County 4-H is the youth component of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension System, supported by a staff of specialists at North Carolina State University and NC A&T State University. Four-H is the community of young people, aged 5-18, learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills. To learn more about how you can become involved in 4-H, as a member or as a volunteer, contact Kathy Kuhlman, 4-H Agent at 349-2046.

...OBESITY continued from page 9

model to reduce obesity rates among young children by improving their daily nutrition and level of physical activity as well as their outdoor environments in child care and the community in general.

"Shape NC addresses a staggering epidemic our state is facing," said Stephanie Fanjul, president of The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc., the organization that leads Smart Start. "Bringing a program that reinforces the benefits of a healthy weight, nutritious foods, physical activity and healthy living to children, their teachers and families is a powerful step in the right direction."

As part of Shape NC, Smart Start partnerships will select a local child care program to serve as a model center for the community. The child care program will receive teacher training about children's health and nutrition, a curriculum that promotes children's physical activity, and updates to outdoor spaces to promote active play. The pro-

gram will use this information to create nutrition and physical activity policies and practices that will benefit children in their care for years to come.

"From Cherokee County to Edgecombe County, local child care programs will become the centers to help bring the benefits of healthy weight, nutritious foods, physical activity and healthy living to children, their families and teachers," said Kathy Higgins, BCBSNC Foundation president. "The selection of these eight communities across our state is a solid step toward addressing the childhood obesity epidemic."

The eight Smart Start partnerships will also develop comprehensive community action plans to combat early childhood obesity. Four of the Smart Start partnerships named will serve as a hub providing training and technical assistance to other Smart Start partnerships to further expand childhood obesity prevention efforts serving children

in the state. These partnerships are Buncombe County Partnership for Children, Inc., Down East Partnership for Children, Onslow County Partnership for Children, Inc., and Randolph County Partnership for Children.

For more information about Shape NC or other Smart Start programs, visit www.smartstart.org or contact your local Smart Start partnership.

The earliest years of childhood are critical. Experiences during this time literally shape the structure of the brain. Because today's children are tomorrow's leaders, parents and workers, everyone has a stake in making sure all children have the experiences they need to thrive. Smart Start is the system that brings together all the people involved in a young child's life—families, teachers, doctors, caregivers, social workers, and many others—to ensure every child has all they need for healthy growth and development.

... FISCAL from page 1

latest word is the state is grappling with a \$3.7 billion deficit.

"Considering the state has a \$19 billion budget, a \$3.7 billion shortfall is a lot and that's a problem," said County Manager Jack Horton.

To offset its deficit, the board expects the state to shift more and more fiscal responsibility to the counties. The biggest issue is the school system and it dominated much of Saturday's discussion concerning the budget – as did the use of the unreserved fund balance, because some see it as money to spend rather than money to hold in reserve for emergencies.

Horton said it's a pretty good bet that the county will have to patch holes left by the state in the MC School System's budget which depends solely on federal, state and county funds.

"The state has asked BOEs across the state to supply it with 5%, 10% and 15% cut scenarios and whatever they don't fund will be shifted to the county level," said Horton. "It's likely the state will cut 5,000 state-funded teachers for FY 2011-12."

Using the percentage cutting scenario, Horton said the county would have to come up with \$2.5 million for the school system at a 5% cut, \$5 million at a 10% cut – money it just doesn't have.

"We would have to go into our fund balance," he said.

The MC School system has a fund balance of \$2.7 million which commissioners will likely ask them to dip into, as well.

"I hate to say this," said Commissioner Bobby Kupperts, "But their fund balance is our fund balance. They can't get \$2.5 million from us while protecting their fund balance which is really the county's (the taxpayers) money."

Commissioners agreed that the county will have to do what's necessary concerning the school system, but the solution is going to mean cuts somewhere and it's going to mean using more fund balance than the county or the school system is typically comfortable using.

Evelyn Southard, Finance Director, reminded the commission how hard it is to replace fund balance money. Macon County's current fund balance is \$13,328,538 which amounts to 31.13% of the projected \$42,818,145 budget. That 31.13% equals \$2,624,002 more than 25% the board traditionally keeps in its unreserved fund balance – so there is some money to play with.

"Having a strong fund balance is one reason we don't have worries today like so many other counties," said Horton. "It also gives us opportunities to use local money which means we don't have to borrow money."

Kupperts said that it's likely fund balance money will be used in 2011-2012 – though it can only be used for capital expenses and not recurring expenses – and he reminded the board that it's taken a long time to generate.

"It's taken from 1800 to 2011 to get our



Commissioners met with county staff and citizens at the SCC complex on Siler Road during a worksession to prepare for FY 2011-12. Photo by Kim Lewicki

fund balance to this amount and given the economic times, it could take even longer if we do away with it," he said.

Horton said the county is reaping benefits due to its healthy fund balance but that a 25% fund balance represents only three months of county expenditures. Counties are required to have a minimum 8% fund balance. "Any less than that and the state comes looking for you," said Horton.

Commissioner Kevin Corbin, who has sat on the school board side of the county's budget for years, said it's definitely a different view from his seat at the commission's table, but said the fund balance is a "rainy day fund" and "I think we can all agree, it's raining."

Horton reminded the board that it can't spend the fund balance on operating expenditures. "Spending it for that is like living off your savings and you can't do that for long," he said.

Southard reminded the board that another good reason to keep a healthy fund balance is because the county can use it to front capital expenses while it waits for reimbursements. "If we didn't have it, we would have a cash flow problem."

But with \$2.6 million over the 25% fund balance the MC Commission agreed long ago to protect, the county will have room to breath which might help the school system.

Commission Chair Brian McClellan said the board will have to make hard decisions in 2011-12. "No one is exempt from that," he said referring to the school system. "We just can't get around the obvious."

Kupperts said the school system is really tied into the state because 80% of the school budget is dependent on the state and 20% is dependent on local money and it has no taxing authority.

"It is really tied to the wrong end of the dog," he said. "The BOE is an elected board but it has no ability to tax or raise money. It's a frustrating place to be."

In FY 2010-2011, the county budgeted \$7,870,630 for the schools – as of Dec. 31, 2010, \$4,007,707 was expended. That figure doesn't include the money the county has spent to service the debts for new school construction.

Southard said in projecting the county's 2011-2012 budget – whose work is just beginning – she has been very careful projecting revenues which she has projected to be \$34,283 over last year. She said sales tax July-October are up and anticipates \$400,000 more for that line item than budgeted through June 30, 2010.

McClellan listed goals and expectations for 2011-2012 including the continuation of relationship building between the county and its two municipalities – Highlands and Franklin; the school board, and the Planning Board.

"These relationships translate to a savings for taxpayers, which was seen at the Hudson Library where by using county employees money was saved and redundancies eliminated," he said.

He said the commission has to work on its health care and retirement plan for employees to include higher deductibles and a possible health savings plan.

High on his list was putting together a workable budget without increasing taxes and working with the Economic Development Commission to bring new businesses to the county. "We are starting to bear fruit in this department and it's important that we get behind these efforts."

All the commissioners agreed with McClellan saying Economic Development could ensure a bright future for the county.

"It's the only way the county can stop 'brain drain,'" said Commissioner Ronnie Beale. "We've invested so much in the education of our young people, but there aren't any jobs here. We have to work on that," he said. He also said regardless of the financial situation in the county, there are some things that can't change.

"We have to maintain the services we provide our citizens any way we can."

He also said the county needs to capitalize on new revenue streams and new dynamics in the county.

"Construction has wagged the dog for a long time and I don't know if we will ever see it return to 2006 levels. We rode that wave for a long time. Tourism is ongoing and room tax proceeds are up, so that's encouraging.

Now we just have to get our visitors to open up their pocketbooks."

Commissioner Kupperts agreed saying it is time to shift the county's focus. "We know what it looked like in 2008 now we need to ask 'How is it going to look in the future?'"

He said child care options – which are lacking in the county – are a big component of Economic Development. "That's a quality-of-life component that people look for when relocating business – hospitals, education and child care."

He agreed with Beale saying the county must protect the services it now offers, "But we have to realize it's not free. When we sit down to do the budget, we have to be fully aware of what was said here today. We need to keep our minds open, but we need to wait and see what we are getting from Raleigh."

Commissioner Corbin said he believes the more money you leave in the hands of taxpayers the better because it ends up going around the county at least three times.

Chairman McClellan ended the meeting saying he was encouraged with where the county is and encouraged about where it is going.

"Every child is going to get a good education; we will meet the needs of those who can't help themselves; we will focus on Economic Development and since revenues have bottomed out it's now clear the county is in a strong position to move forward."

– Kim Lewicki

... ICE MELT from pg 1

criminals have no boundaries and that fighting drugs and the crime associated with them requires a collaborative effort among the law enforcement community.

This investigation was initiated following previous arrests and seizures of individuals for operating clandestine methamphetamine labs throughout Western North Carolina.

"Citizens need to understand that any individual who participates or assists any other person in the making or purchasing of materials to produce methamphetamine or any other drug is subject to being investigated, arrested, and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," said Sheriff Robert Holland.

Individuals arrested in Macon County as a result of this operation: Guy Austin Zinkand, Jennifer Lynn Collins, Debbie Lee Collier, Heidi Johanna Dreml, Victoria Elizabeth McCurdy, Tina Marie Warren,

Individuals arrested by other agencies during the operation: Timothy Brandon Luker, date of birth, Tripp Lester Parker, Johnny O'Dell Fortner, Betty Elaine Rich Sherill, Johnny Alvin Rice, Jr., Tyler Arnold Messer, Dustin Jay Surret, Richard Ben Wike, Jr.,

Four other suspects targeted in this ongoing investigation are currently being sought by law enforcement and additional arrests are forthcoming.

Two other individuals were arrested in Macon County on unrelated felony drug charges during the course of this investigation were Clayman Dean Conner and Frederick Douglas.

... ORDINANCE continued from page 1

Ordinance, should match the boiler plate version of the Council-Manager form of government "everywhere he knows of in North Carolina" reasoning that it should be that way in Highlands.

He said in the boiler plate version, there is a balance of power as well as checks and balances in place because the Town Board is the legislative and executive arm of government and the Town Manager only represents the administrative arm of government. He also said the Police Chief and the Zoning Administrator can influence a Town Board more than they can a Town Manager so giving the Town Manager ultimate control is basically a safer form of government.

Two other people spoke in favor making the Charter Implementing Ordinance the boiler plate version – Harry Bears and Joe Parrot.

Bears said having worked in corporate America for 18 ½ years, where a chain of command was in place, he believes amending the ordinance is exactly what needs to happen.

Joe Parrot simply said he concurred with everything Mayor Wilkes (citizen) said and believed "this is the route the town should take."

Everyone else who spoke – Patrick Taylor, Alice Nelson, Alan Marsh, Linda Clark, Tom Clark, Thomas Craig, Charlie Dasher, Elaine Reynolds, Hazel Potts, and Tony Potts – all suggested the ordinance stay as it is.

"The town hasn't operated under the hybrid form of Council-Manager form of government now in place long enough to know if it works or not. "We are just getting our feet wet and there is no reason to change it now," said Marsh.

Several people spoke to Wilke's claim that Highlands Charter Implementing Ordinance should mirror what is used elsewhere saying that Highlands isn't like anywhere else so that line of thought shouldn't apply.

Alice Nelson said it simply. "One size doesn't fit all. Just because other towns use the 'straight' form in their ordinances doesn't mean it's right for Highlands."

She said the "details" that Wilke's said

the Town Manager should handle equate to 'people.' "People are more than details. Government is based on people who run it — they are not details to be managed."

Linda Clark spoke to Bears comment about the way things are done in corporations saying, "We are not part of a corporation, we are a government and the people need to be more involved. Citizens won't really have a say in any of these discussions if the ordinance is amended. We would have to vote every person off the council if we didn't like something they did. Putting so much power in the hands of the Town Manager is too far removed from the people." She also repeated what has been said over the last few months. "I don't see that what we have now isn't working."

Thomas Craig, chairman of the Planning Board, said he wanted to make it clear that the majority of the Planning Board disagreed with changing the ordinance but he still wasn't clear if keeping the hiring and firing of the Police Chief and Zoning Administrator under the auspices of the Town Board was an omission or was purposefully left in place.

Tony Potts, chairman of the Zoning Board, said he was a on the focus group that worked with the headhunter when searching for Town Manager and said the group was told that those two positions could stay under the arm of the board, "that it was strictly up to the town and in smaller towns it is often done that way," he said.

Taylor reminded the board that the recent treatment of previous Zoning Administrator Joe Cooley has caused the public to worry about people being treated fairly. "No where in the amended ordinance does it say that the person about whom a closed session is called to discuss termination will be given an opportunity to speak before the board. He or she could be dismissed without the board ever hearing his side."

Dasher said in light of recent events at the town level over the past year in the Police Department and Zoning Department, it's a bad time to make changes to the ordinance. "The public is wary and we want a city government that is connected to the public,

something that is more transparent with elected officials responsible to the voters."

Planning Board member John Underwood questioned the process under which Cooley was fired. "Did the Town Manager go to Cooley first and then the Town Board and if Cooley was so bad, why was he given a \$30,000 severance package?"

Reynolds simply said that the way the town was operating now was akin to back room politics.

Hazel Potts said the Town Board needed to remember that this is Highlands, not New York City or Atlanta, GA. "There is unrest in town and something is wrong or else people wouldn't be upset."

Tom Clark said though Highlands is half a world away from Egypt, what is happening there is what happens when one person has total control.

Once the Public Hearing was closed, Mayor Wilkes took his seat at the table and continued the meeting, asking for the question.

At the Jan. 19 Town Board meeting the vote was 3-2 to change the ordinance. A second 3-2 vote was needed at the Feb. 2 meeting following the Public Hearing.

During the discussion period, Commissioner Amy Patterson presented several inconsistencies in the proposed ordinance that didn't comply with state law as outlined in the General Statute.

"You can't go through this ordinance and simply strike out 'Board' and replace it with 'Town Manager' because it's contradictory. 'Employees that are deemed necessary' means the Manager can create any position he wants without review of the Board which is contrary to GS 160A-146 which says 'In cities with the Council-Manager form of government, the manager shall be responsible for preparing position classification and pay plans for submission to the council and, after such plans have been adopted by the council, shall administer them.'

She said what Town Attorney Bill Coward, Wilkes, Drake, Rogers and DeWolf were proposing was not lawful under state law.

She said under the "Other officers and employees" segment where compensation is discussed amending Board to Town Manager – "receive such compensation as from

time to time may be prescribed by the Town Manager" – is contrary to GS 160A-162 that specifically gives authority to "fix or approve" compensation to the Town Board."

"This just doesn't fly in conjunction with state law," she said. "Under Organization 10-1, by simply changing Board with Town Manager, it says the Town Manager shall elect policeman or assistants has it may deem proper." "That sounds like the Manager will now be determining the number of policemen Highlands employs, which again, goes against the statute concerning Council duties as defined in GS 160A-146," she said.

Commissioner Drake said that the Town Manager doesn't have the money to hire so to use that as an example was crazy and misleading. "The purse strings are one of the biggest controls we have over the Town Manager," he said.

Attorney Coward suggested the board adopt the amended ordinance anyway, saying it could be tweaked as many times as it is needed to get it perfect, but that the way it reads now, "won't really do any harm." "We can go back again and again and eventually we will have a perfect ordinance," he said.

He asked Commissioner Patterson if she would vote for the changes tonight, if the items she brought up were tweaked and she said no because she didn't think the ordinance should be changed in the first place.

"I was elected to do something right. Why vote for something that is so flawed?"

Coward said the flaws she mentioned were of little consequence and wouldn't shut down the government.

Commissioner Dotson asked "Why take the chance? If we are going to do this, we owe it to our constituents to do the best job we can do. This is not something we should patch up later. We need to get it right the first time."

Finally Wilkes said based on the feelings of the citizens and based on the issues Commissioner Patterson brought up he suggested not voting on the amendment.

Drake withdrew his motion. Coward said if the town wants to move forward it must start all over and the 3-2 vote made at the Jan. 19 meeting wouldn't count.

– **Kim Lewicki**

... SUB continued from page 1

a composite score of 85% or higher is mandatory so its documented that all substitutes have the set of skills for handling classroom management issues and effectively teaching in the classroom.

Candidates are allowed four chances in each of the five parts to reach their best score. The five parts are Classroom Management, Teaching Strategies, Being Prepared and Professional, Special Education, and Appropriate use of Fill-in Activities.

There are four exemptions for taking the course: substitutes must hold a current NC teaching license, hold a current teaching license from a state with reciprocity with North Carolina, have successfully completed the "Effective Teacher Training" course or will be completing a student internship in the Macon County School system.

Substitute teachers who have already been approved by the BOE and are on the

substitution list who don't meet one of the four exemptions have one calendar year to complete the requirement.

The cost of the online course is \$39.95 per person and includes the assessment and the "SubDiploma" given at the end of the course. Everything is online but candidates can purchase a paperback copy of the handbook for \$19.95.

To purchase the SubSkills Online Training Package go to <http://stedi.org/subs/training/STEDICourse.aspx>. When asked to give School District Information, select NC and then Macon County Schools as the first preference of school districts. A DSL high-speed connection is recommended.

After taking the online course and earning an 85 or higher, those wishing to substitute and not yet on the county's list, must complete an Application for Substitute Teacher and an Authorization and Release Form to

authorize a background check. Those forms, including the "SubDiploma," should be turned into the principal of the school for which they wish to substitute.

The principal will turn the forms into the school system's personnel department. After the background check is done, the name of the potential substitute will be placed on the agenda for approval at the next monthly Board of Education meeting.

Once approved, an appointment with the personnel department is needed to complete paperwork and to issue the Macon County Schools name badge.

"I suspect this new requirement will decrease the current 400+ substitutes on our list by about 100-150," said Moore.

Certified substitutes earn \$90 per day; non-certified substitutes earn \$69 per day. Teachers typically pick the substitute they want from the list at their schools based on

compatibility, the substitute's ability to manage and follow the teacher's instructions.

"Completion of the required training course will be of great benefit to the individuals who desire to enter our classrooms and work directly with the young people in our care," said Superintendent Dan Brigman. "This requirement will also assist with our efforts to maintain a highly qualified and competent pool of substitute teachers during the years to come."

The bottom line is teachers must meet staff development requirements throughout their careers so it just makes sense that substitutes should have to do so, too, said Moore.

"If we want our substitutes to be a viable part of our education process, then we need to expect them to be prepared," he said.

Links to the test will be up on the Macon County Schools website the first of next week

– **Kim Lewicki**

• BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NEWS •

HCC named a 'Groundwater Guardian Green Site'

Highlands Country Club Golf Course was recently named a 2010 Groundwater Guardian Green Site by The Groundwater Foundation in recognition of the site's groundwater and environmental stewardship. Highlands Country Club earned this exclusive designation based on its current practices related to water use, pesticide and fertilizer management, and pollution prevention.

Groundwater Guardian Green Sites are essentially places with a lot of green space – like golf courses; ball fields; educational campuses; and residential, recreational, and office parks – that implement groundwater and surface water-friendly practices to maintain the site. To earn the exclusive Groundwater Guardian Green Site designation, site managers complete a simple application that uniformly evaluates and documents their site's groundwater-friendly practices, such as selecting plants adapted to the region's climate, tracking irrigation water use, maintaining a no-application zone around surface water and active wells, and applying fertilizer based on nutrient needs.

2010 is Highlands Country Club Golf Course's first year as a designated Groundwater Guardian Green Site. The Green Site program began in 2007 to recognize good stewards of groundwater by encouraging managers of highly-

managed green spaces to implement, measure, and document their groundwater-friendly practices.

Groundwater Foundation President Jane Griffin points out that, "Groundwater is an extremely valuable resource in the U.S. that contributes to our health and well-being every day. Most Americans rely on groundwater as a source of drinking water, but they also rely on groundwater as a necessary input for agriculture and business. Recognizing active groundwater stewards like Highlands Country Club is our way of motivating others to do the same."

Potential sites are encouraged to get involved in the Groundwater Guardian Green Site program by downloading the program application at www.groundwater.org/gg/greensites.html,

e-mailing guardian@groundwater.org, or calling 1-800-858-4844.

The Groundwater Foundation is a non-profit organization based in Lincoln, Nebraska with a mission to educate people and inspire action to ensure sustainable, clean groundwater for future generations. Since its inception in 1985, the Foundation has offered various educational programming for youth and adults. To learn more, visit www.groundwater.org.

LTWA study determines area of 'safe passage' for fish species

The Little Tennessee Watershed Association (LTWA) and its partners recently completed a fish passage assessment for small streams that drain into the Little Tennessee River in the area between the NC/GA state line and Lake Emory in Franklin. The project was funded through a grant from the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership, which is a regional collaboration of natural resource and science agencies, conservation organizations and private interests developed to strengthen the management and conservation of aquatic resources in the southeastern United States.

The purpose of the study was to identify areas where fish may be "cut-off" from good habitat in sections of some of these tributary streams. Predominately, these areas are around culverts where a road crosses the stream. Improper placement of a culvert often create habitat that is difficult, if not impossible, for a fish to swim through. This is a problem because it limits the range of habitat that a fish can occupy.

Just as there are many different types of fish, there are many different reasons for fish to be able to travel along the river and up into smaller streams.

Some fish travel to small streams to lay eggs, some to escape warming waters, others to find food, and yet others to avoid being eaten. We do not yet understand all the reasons why fish need to travel; nevertheless, we know that they do travel.

Common problems associated with culverts include: not enough water in the culvert (too shallow), too great of a drop below the culvert (waterfall effect), or the "fire hose" effect if the flow through the culvert is too great on a regular basis.

Just as different types of fish have specific behaviors, each species are shaped differently and have various swimming abilities. For the fish passage project, culvert assessments were based for three groups of fish.

The first group is the strong bodied swimmers such as adult trout. The first group is not the best criteria to rank a barrier since this limits to so few fish. Generally, strong swimming fish use their ability to feed on smaller and slower fish, therefore, just because a trout can access a reach of stream, it may not be beneficial unless its food source can access the reach too.

The second group includes medium skilled swimmers such as young trout and shiners.

The final group includes darters which cannot jump well and have the most difficulty swimming against strong currents.

Over the past few months, LTWA has inspected roughly 160 stream crossings. Many times a visual inspection alone can determine if the crossing is a barrier or not. However, 40 sites required a more elaborate survey to identify if the crossing was a barrier to one or more groups of fish. Teaming up with various agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, North Carolina Department of Environmental and Natural Resources, and North Carolina Department of Transportation, the Little Tennessee Watershed Association completed the surveys and will now evaluate each crossing for all three groups of fish according to the measurements taken.

This project was designed as a follow up to previous cooperative barrier assessment efforts begun in 2007 and the information used from this project will influence future restoration projects in the Little Tennessee River watershed.

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• POLICE & FIRE DEPT. •

Highlands PD log entries from Jan 25 Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor, or public officials have been used.

Jan. 25

• At 2:45 p.m., a larceny was reported at Sarah Valentine Photography. The shop was entered with a key and computer and camera equipment valued at \$21,000 was taken. The case is under investigation.

Jan. 26

• At 8:30 a.m., Charles Daniel Fink-Reeves, of Cashiers, was arrested on US 64 for driving without a license, an expired registration and an expired inspection.

Jan. 27

• At 9:30 p.m., Deborah Lynn Baynard, 32 and William Edward Owen, 49, both of Salem, NC, were arrested for simple physical assault when police were called to Mitchell's Lodge & Cottages where they were patrons, concerning a domestic dispute.

Jan. 28

• At 4:17 p.m., officers responded to a 9-1-1 hangup from The Hampton Inn. Everything was OK.

Jan. 30

• At 2:05 a.m., officers delivered a criminal summons for another agency.
• At 9:20 p.m., officers responded to a call of trespassing at a residence on Mt. Lori Drive.
• During the week, police officers responded to 1 alarm and issued 3 citations.

Highlands F&R Dept. log entries from Jan 27:

Jan. 27

• At 8 a.m., the dept. responded to a 2-vehicle accident with minor injuries at Spring and 3rd streets. EMS transported to the hospital.

• At 11:17 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Crisp Road.

Jan. 29

• At 11:18 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Hicks Road. EMS transported to the hospital.

• At 1:27 p.m., the dept. rescued a 74-year-old man from a residence on Blue Valley Road who had been hit in the head by a limb. He was flown to Mission Memorial in Asheville by MAMA.

Jan. 30

• At 11:09 a.m., the dept. was first-responders at a residence on Owl Gap Road. EMS transported to the hospital.

• At 12:44 p.m., the dept. was first-responders at a residence on Dendy Orchard Road. EMS transported to the hospital.

• At 2:48 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Hicks Road. EMS transported to the hospital,

Jan. 31

• At 12:34 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a dog falling through ice of a pond on NC 106. He got out prior to arrival.

• At 1:57 p.m., the dept. responded to a vehicle accident when the brakes of a dump truck gave way on Walhalla Road. The truck in front of it, stopped it. There were no injuries.

Feb. 2

• At 8:35 a.m., the dept. was called to assist the Scaly Fire Department with an accident with injuries at Buck Knob Road and NC 106. The call was cancelled en route.

• BUSINESS/ORGANIZATON NEWS •

Land Trust is \$50 stronger



RBC Bank donates \$50 to become a member of the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust. Pictured are Sue Gorski, Manager of RBC Bank Highlands, and Gary Wein, director of the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust. Gorski said the Land Trust is vital in protecting what makes the Highlands/Cashiers areas attractive to visitors and 2nd home owners alike.

First Presbyterian's
'Construction Ministry Team' at work



The First Presbyterian Church of Highlands has organized a Construction Ministry Team to renovate the homes of families in the Highlands area. All levels of skill and strength are needed. We provide the tools, materials for the job and lunch on work days.

You will need your favorite hand tools, layered clothes that can get dirty and a desire

to help someone in our community.

Other activities of the team include building ramps, installing chair lifts and installing water systems in West Virginia communities that have a severe problem with contaminated water.

If you are interested and available in participating please call Hillrie Quin at 526-2385 or email

Rotary gives cash to teachers



Highlands School teachers Julie McClellan and Francie Jetter with their gifts.

On Friday, Jan. 28, The Rotary Club of Highlands continued its long tradition of presenting a cash gift to the teachers at Highlands School. Rotary President Jodie Cook, along with Bill Futral, Brian Stiehler and other Rotary members visited the school and presented each teacher with a \$100 bill. This money may be used by each teacher for

any purpose, especially supplies or enrichment materials not covered by the school or parents. "This gift is a token of our club's appreciation for the dedication of our teachers," said Cook. "It's Rotary's way of saying thank you and recognizing the importance of these individuals."

RBC Bank to reward teachers

Because great teachers work long after the bell rings to ensure our children succeed in school, we want to make sure they're rewarded for their efforts. That's why we're pleased to present the 8th Annual Tribute To Teachers program.

This year we are recognizing our best educators all year long with two tribute periods. New this year also, is that you can nominate any local elementary, middle school, OR high school teacher. This is the first year the nomination process is open to high school teachers.

Nominations submitted between January 1, 2011 and March 13, 2011 will be considered for the May tribute awards, and those submitted after March 13th will be considered for the December 2011 tribute

awards.

Visit www.rbcbankusa.com/tribute to find out how, and to make your nominations. Since the inception of the program, 8 years ago, there have been 3 times that a Highlands School teacher has won the \$500 classroom cash! Jane Chalker is a 2 time winner, and Melanie Miller is also a past winner! Let's submit those nominations and have another Highlands School teacher win again this year!

The program awards 1 grand prize winner from each of the 2 award periods this year - a \$2,000 shopping spree for the winning teacher to purchase supplies for her classroom!

Questions should be directed to Sue Gorski at 526-0606.

... SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING from page 12

we been in conflict and a disagreement and instead of talking it out with the one we are in conflict with, we talk about our problem with everyone else until a mole hill becomes a mountain? I guess the point is this, when we have conflict; when we

have a disagreement, talk it out face-to-face, not behind someone's back. It is not only the right thing to do but it is the less stressful thing to do. In talking face-to-face we come to understand that loving each other is easier than hurting each other.

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