

Highlands' Newspaper

FREE every Thursday

Volume 10, Number 10

Internet PDF Version at www.HighlandsNewspaperPDF.com

Thursday, March 8, 2012

Don't forget to
"Spring Ahead!"
Turn your clocks forward
one hour Sunday night!

Through March 10

• Highlands Little League will be having registration for the 2012 baseball season at the Highlands Recreation Center. If you would like to register, stop by the front desk at the Highlands Recreation Center and complete a registration form and medical release. Practices will begin approximately March 19th. The cost for the first child is \$50 and \$45 for each additional child. The fee includes hat, shirt and socks. Players are responsible for shoes and baseball pants. Registration is for ages 5 to 12 and the birthday cutoff date is April 30th. If you have any questions, contact Jerry Moore @ ejmoorej@yahoo.com or 828-482-2032.

Saturday, March 10

• Chili Cook Off at the Community Building 6:30-9:30 p.m. To enter the contest call 526-5841.

• At The Bascom. Art Cinema. Sit back and enjoy our weekly feature presentation "Craft in America" 2 pm.

Sunday, March 11

• The Foxfire Boys Bluegrass Group will be participating in the morning worship service at First Presbyterian Church at 11 am on Sunday. All are welcome to attend.

Tuesday, March 13

• At the Hudson Library, the movie "The Big Year" Tuesday at 4 pm. Steve Martin, Jack Black, and Owen Wilson headline the cast of this comedy. The story is about two bird enthusiasts who try to defeat the cocky, cutthroat world record holder in a year-long bird-spotting competition. The movie and popcorn are free.

• Come and listen to the Irish Blarney Tales and Tales of Spring stories at the Story Swap on Tuesday at 7 pm, at the Ugly Dog Pub at 294 S. Fourth St. in Highlands. If you have a special 3-7 minute blarney or spring story to tell or read, sign up at the pub or call 369-1927. Note – Our winter start time is a half hour earlier!

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Jury finds former OEI CEO guilty on wire fraud charges

**US Attorney's Office
Western District of NC**

On Wednesday, February 29, a federal jury in Asheville convicted Mario Clothinho Gomes, 57,

currently of Atlanta, GA, on two counts of wire fraud and one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud following a three-day trial, announced Anne M. Tompkins,

U.S. Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina.

U.S. Attorney Tompkins is joined in making today's announcement. • See GUILTY page 3

County PB controversy over; seats filled

Though the possible application of term limits on all county boards and committees still hangs in the balance, at its Tuesday, February 28 continuation meeting, commissioners finally appointed members to three boards.

With the "hot" term limit issue finalized at the regular Feb. 14 meeting, the next thing was appointments to the Planning Board, the Economic Development Commission (EDC) and the Library Board.

Commissioners started with the easy ones first.

The two people who applied for positions on the Library Board were unanimously selected. For the Highlands seat, Dale Sticka will replace Lee Byers and for the Nantahala seat Crystal Bryson will replace Vince West. Neither was seeking reappointment.

On the recommendation of Ed Shatley, chairman of Macon County EDC, Connie Haire, formerly of SCC, was reappointed to the EDC and Farrell Jamison, Franklin Town Alderman who retired from Caterpillar was unanimously approved. David Culpepper III also applied.

As to the Planning Board – the

• See CONTROVERSY page 3

Highlands School students take on Boston



The resiliency of youth makes trip a success. See story on page 10.

Photo by Tracey Hedden

NC PreK OK ... for now

At last week's Macon County School Board meeting, Superintendent Dr. Dan Brigman mentioned a proposal afoot in the General Assembly to privatize the More At Four program – now called NC Pre-K.

"This will deal a severe blow to at-risk children who benefit from attending public pre-school prior to entering Kindergarten," said Brigman. "The pre-school gives them a chance of succeeding."

• See NC PRE-K page 18

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Hybrid form on block March 20

Highlands' form of government continues to be a controversial issue between commissioners and among the citizenry.

At the Tuesday, March 6 Town Board meeting Town Attorney Bill Coward walked commissioners through the process to align Highlands' government with the state charter for the Council-Manager form.

Based on the 3-2 vote taken at the Feb. 7 meeting to abandon the hybrid form of Council-Manager where the Police Chief and Zoning Administrator are hired and fired by the Town Board and revert to the straight Council-Manager form as outlined in General Statute and the town's charter, Coward said certain processes needed to take place that can culminate during the March 20 Town Board meeting.

"If your intentions are to go

• See HYBRID page 16

FRI	SAT	SUN
53 39F	51 35F	48 40F

• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• FORUM •

Highlands' Newspaper moves to Thursdays

Starting with this issue, Highlands' Newspaper will once again be on the streets and on the web every Thursday morning.

When the Town Board voted to move its meeting day to Tuesday, we decided to put the paper out every Wednesday morning to give readers the Highlands' news as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, by doing so we were unable to cover the county news in a timely manner – coverage our readers have always counted on. The county commission also meets on Tuesday nights and the length of the meetings, as well as the proximity to Highlands, made print deadlines impossible.

In addition, putting the paper out on Wednesday has hampered our ability to grow because there just isn't enough time to produce extra pages.

So, from now on an expanded Highlands' Newspaper will be on the streets and web at www.highlandsnewspaperPDF.com every Thursday full of all the free news, features, events and information our readers have come to expect.

Thanks for bearing with us through these growing pains!

Kim Lewicki
Publisher

• CORRECTION •

In the Feb. 29 edition of Highlands' Newspaper, in the story "Couple's life goes up in flames" we reported that firefighters believe the fire started in an old chest freezer under the house.

Though the official report hasn't been finalized, Beverly Owens, owner of the home on Luther Owens Road, said the fire inspector said it's possible it was an electrical fire that started in the attic which then traveled down into the home rather than up from under the home. We regret the error and are happy to set the record straight.

• HAWK'S EYE VIEW •



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 Sunday at 5 p.m. There is a 500-word limit without prior approval.

Highlands' Newspaper

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Circulation 10,000

Toll Free FAX: 866-212-8913 • (828) 526-3228

Email: HighlandsEditor@aol.com

Publisher/Editor – Kim Lewicki; Copy Editor– Tom Merchant

Cartoonist – Karen Hawk; Digital Media - Jim Lewicki

Locally owned and operated Kim & Jim Lewicki

Adobe PDF version at www.HighlandsInfo.com
265 Oak St.; P.O. Box 2703, Highlands, N.C. , 28741

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• LETTERS •

A proposal for another form of Highlands Town government

Before last year's vote on a hybrid form of government, everyone was told the town should move forward regardless of the outcome. Well, the issue came back one week later, and last month's 3 to 2 vote to adopt the city manager form of government would appear to have resolved the issue. Or has it?

Highlanders are a creative community living on this mountain plateau. In that spirit, can we think outside the box, look ahead, and create a unique government that may just be the right fit for this dynamic little community of 925 residents?

Some board members believe the manager form of government is much more efficient than the previous administrator form. Apparently, it was becoming increasingly difficult for several of the commissioners to keep up with our complex town government.

Let me propose a better solution. Let's create a "CEO" form of government and downsize by consolidating the positions of the Town Board, Mayor and Town Manager.

Now before you stop laughing and reading, hear me out. Some people have likened the town manager system to a business model. Why stop there? Why not create a Town Chief Executive Officer who is directly answerable to the citizens?

The new Town CEO of Highlands would stand for periodic election, and preside over town meetings once or twice a month. The CEO would assemble the administrative staff at these meetings to make reports, answer questions and provide input. Citizens would be encouraged to respond and present their needs. The CEO would make formal policy decisions and post them on the town website and in the newspapers. There would be no middle people,

... GUILTY continued from page 1

nouncement by Chris Briese, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Charlotte Division.

According to documents filed in court and trial proceedings, between 2004 and 2008, Gomes served as Chief Executive Officer and General Manager of the Old Edwards Inn & Spa ("the Inn") in Highlands, North Carolina. Evidence presented at trial showed that Gomes used his position to orchestrate a series of kickbacks from vendors and contractors who performed services for the Inn. According to trial testimony, during the conspiracy Gomes, along with his co-conspirators, fraudulently inflated invoices submitted to the Inn. Once invoices were paid, Gomes and his co-conspirators shared the proceeds of their scheme. Gomes also had an addition added to his home which he billed to the Inn with the assistance of his co-conspirators. The pattern of fraud detailed during trial spanned a period of over two years. Trial evidence also established that Gomes received in excess of \$325,000 for his role in the scheme and conspiracy in 2007 alone. At the time of the crimes, according to evidence introduced at trial, Gomes made \$190,000 annually.

Gomes is currently released on bond.

At sentencing, Gomes faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison and a maximum fine of \$250,000 for each count of conviction.

Gomes' co-conspirators, Greg Fuselier, 59, currently of Metairie, Louisiana, and George Mathis, 60, currently of Franklin, North Carolina, pled guilty to mail fraud for their respective roles in the fraud. Fuselier and Mathis, who each testified against Gomes at trial, also face a maximum 20 year prison sentence and \$250,000 fines.

The investigation for the case was handled by the FBI. The prosecution of the case was handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Corey Ellis of the U.S. Attorney's Office, in Asheville.

The current CEO of Old Edwards, Richard Delaney, said Highlands Police Chief Bill Harrell was extremely helpful at the beginning of the process, giving direction and helping to keep the ball rolling until it was handed over to the Feds.

"Of course, we truly regret any negativity or harm to the town and Old Edwards that occurred as a result of these circumstances — as well as the stress that was put on our employees and the Williams family," said Delaney. "We are happy to have moved successfully through this unfortunate situation we found ourselves in and

can now put it behind us."

Delaney said OEI has worked hard over the last four years to hopefully bring back the trust and credibility within the town.

"We value the camaraderie and the re-

lationships between our staff and our Highlands neighbors, and we all feel extremely positive about the future of Highlands and Old Edwards," he said.

... CONTROVERSY continued from page 1

board which was the object of all the controversy — seven people applied: Lewis Penland, Chris Hanners, Bill Futral, William Shilling, Victor Drummond, Harry Yoder and Sue Waldroop.

Commissioner Jim Tate made the first motion to fill the vacancies on the Planning Board — to reappoint Lewis Penland and to appoint Christopher Hanners.

"This is a tough one," said Tate. "It's a controversial subject, plus I sit on the Planning Board as the liaison so I have an interest in this. At the Feb. 14 meeting, Jimmy Goodman said politics should be taken out of this discussion and I took that to heart. The Planning Board is a bumper between the people and us and new ideas, knowledge, skills and talent are needed especially concerning the subdivision ordinance and land use. I've read the educational backgrounds and skills of the applicants and know three candidates through college or work. After discussing my choices with the Planning Board

members — Chris Hanners, Bill Futral and Lewis Penland — they unanimously

• See CONTROVERSY page 8

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The Adventures of Frisky – Part 1 of 4

A boy and his dog

This true story is entrenched into my brain and is as clear as if it just happened yesterday. For me it is a wonderful childhood memory.

The big war was in full swing but as a child, I could care less. In fact, it was fun and exciting to experience the air raid drills. I would sit in the dark and peek out the window of my house, listening to the scary air raid sirens. I had no idea there was a dangerous enemy out there want-

ing to kill us all.

But this is not a story of my life during the real war; it's a story about a small dog born during that war who would be named Frisky and become my best friend. Frisky was the first dog I ever owned and here's how we became best friends.

I hung out on the streets of Louisville with a kid whose name I have long forgotten. Yes, children ran the streets back then as it was a simpler life. One summer afternoon we headed over to his house and found his dad in the back yard filling a large tub of water. Their dog had given birth to her third litter of nine puppies. She could no longer feed or care for them. They were dying of starvation so he was filling the tub to drown them.

One by one, the dad picked up a pup, less than a week old, and put them in the tub of water, holding them under. After watching him kill three, I blurted, "Please don't kill anymore puppies."

The dad smiled and said, "This is the best way. If I don't drown them, they'll die a slow death of starvation. You want one?"

I blurted out "yes" without thinking of the consequences of what would happen when I got home.

"There's six left. Take your pick," he said.

I stared at the remaining pups all huddled together in a wicker basket and decided to take the smallest of the litter. "I want that one," I said, smiling.

The dad lifted the runt, placing it in the palm of his hand and held it out for me to take. "I want to warn you that you picked the runt and he'll be the hardest to keep alive. Are you sure you want that one?" he asked.

I nodded with uncertainty and he handed me the pup. There was an instant bond the very second I felt the warm puppy in my hands. I held it to my chest and thanked the dad. Not wanting to watch him kill the remaining pups, I headed home. Now the hard part was ahead. I would have to convince my parents we should have a dog.

"Freddie, what have you done?" my mom asked with an irritated voice.

"I had to do it, Mom, or it would be drowned," I responded in defense. "Please let me keep him," I pleaded.

"It's a boy dog and it will urinate on



Fred Wooldridge

Feedback is encouraged!
askfredanything@aol.com

everything in this house. Take the dog back to its owner," she ordered.

Tears filled my eyes as I pushed open the back screen door of our kitchen. The door slammed behind me and I just stood there on the small porch crying. As a last ditch effort, I turned and begged, "They're going to kill it. Please let me take care of it. I promise I will and you won't have to do anything."

"Come back in here and let me tell you what's in store for you before you commit to this," my mom said. "There's a ton of work ahead for you. This dog's eyes are not even open yet. You will have to bottle feed it for at least six weeks. It will barely be off the bottle when school starts. Then what? Who takes care of this dog while you're in school? And how will I keep this dog from urinating all over my nice furniture? And what is your dad going to say when he hears you brought a dog home without permission?"

I was overwhelmed and had no answers for her. I held the dog out for her to take and said, "Please don't let them kill my dog."

She held the dog in her hand, smiled and asked, "What would you name it?"

"Frisky" I blurted. "It was the only pup that was wiggling around in the basket."

"Your dad will be home soon. I'll see what he thinks. Don't get your hopes up."

• Part two will be in next Thursday. In the interim, download Fred's thriller titled *Deceived* on your Kindle or Nook.

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• THE VIEW FROM HERE •

The answer to our Afghanistan problem is a simple one ...

If we needed proof that we're in the wrong place at the wrong time, recent demonstrations in Afghanistan have provided it. Violent protests, leaving more than 30 people dead, including six US soldiers followed the revelation that copies of the Quran were thrown out with the trash at Bagram Air Base. Unfortunately local Afghan workers discovered the partially burned books. The resulting violence is worthy of one of the more backward countries in the world.

Yet, we should not be too quick to judge the entire nation on the demonstrations of a few thousand any more than we should judge the United States on events following Hurricane Katrina, or base our opinion of England on the soccer fan thugs who routinely fight, and occasionally kill, following a game. The charred remains of the Islamic holy book have furnished our enemy with a tremendous propaganda tool. It shouldn't be surprising that Afghans, exhausted by decades of war, convinced that their Western partners respect neither their religion nor culture, and outraged by continued civilian deaths would react violently.

It was stupid to burn the books. Whatever the approved method of disposing of used Qurans, we must have been aware it wasn't throwing them in a fire pit with bacon drippings. We are well aware of the sensitivity of Muslims to perceived disrespect to the Prophet and his holy book. Even the folks carrying out trash must have known that their action was insulting, and violent reaction was predictable.

It's hard to believe it was an accident, but it doesn't really matter. What is important is that our investment in



Dr. Henry Salzarulo

Feedback is encouraged.

email:
hsalzarulo@aol.com

lives and resources is being wasted. Despite measured optimism from military and civilian leaders, there is ample evidence that the war is not going well in Afghanistan. We can't trust the police and army. The government is corrupt. Most importantly, the people of Afghanistan, who live in a very different world than ours, hate and suspect us. Burning copies of their holy book only fanned the flames.

We shouldn't be wasting our time, money, and troops in Afghanistan. Our withdrawal should not be based on the Afghan clergy's refusal to accept our apology. Infuriating and demoralizing as it is, not even the murder of six US soldiers by their Afghan counterparts justifies our departure.

We should withdraw from Afghanistan because we cannot accomplish our mission there. We cannot guarantee political stability after our withdrawal. We cannot correct corruption or eliminate opium production. We cannot prevent the Taliban from retaking the country or clerics reversing recently instituted human rights initiatives. In short, we cannot build a nation in our image and likeness in Afghanistan; not in 50 years or 100 years.

Despite enormous financial commitment and continued loss of life, we will have little to show for hanging around until 2014. We must learn that only the citizens of a country can build a nation. It requires common goals and a shared experience. Mostly it requires a desire to be from a nation. In a geographic area made up of competing tribes and rival war lords, the appetite for a nation simply does not exist. Afghanistan is a product of British imperialism. It is not a natural nation and we are incapable of creating an artificial country there.

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Little League signups continue

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• BACK DAYS •

Those who came before and after them – Part 7

This continues our Back Days series in Highlands' Newspaper. The story about the family of John Palmer and Margaret Jane Gribble McKinney families whose descendants tell the tales that will follow in this and subsequent issues.

By Jesse Potts Owens

Before mailing it, she announced a change in plans:

"Mother he wants me to marry him before the Andersons go to Highlands which will be about the first of July. He can't stand the idea of me going away and as he is ready to marry me any time, I guess I won't come home he says as shure as I go home something will be sure to happen. And he won't let me go."

But something did happen, and she came home. Her son Jack is confident that Grandma McKinney wrote, denying her permission to marry. He pictures Granny as the matriarch whose decisions were not questioned.

If Belle had stayed in Chicago, Helen probably would have stayed also, because



**John Palmer and Margaret Jane Gribble
McKinney**

it's impossible to imagine them separated. Even in pictures it is almost always the two of them together.

The story goes that James Cleaveland and Frank Potts, boyhood friends, would

tease them by saying to one, "Hello, Helen and Belle. Where's the other Helen and Belle?"

When these young men were married in 1911, it was to the McKinney twins in a double wedding. As young married women, they lived next door to each other, not far from their parents' home, and when Aunt Helens' husband died, Mama was to a certain extent responsible for her second marriage.

Belle's oldest child, Betsy, became very ill. Dr. Thompson started treating her and rented a room from Helen to be close to the sick child. Subsequently, they married. The sisters probably missed few days in their lives talking to each other until Belle's death from cancer in 1944 separated them. Helen, twice widowed, lived until 1961 when she died of congestive heart failure.

• Next week in Back Days part 9 we return to the family of William Thomas and Martha Ammons Potts.



Belle and Helen McKinney

Photo courtesy of Highlands Historical Society

• COACH'S CORNER •

The All "Team" Team Column

It seems as though every columnist nowadays has their own clever versions of all-star teams, end of season awards, etc...and why should I not follow the crowd. (Hush, mom...no, I would not jump off a bridge if everyone else did it, but I might if it meant a job with ESPN) Anyway, I thought I would provide a list of "teams" that everyone can poke and prod at...some of these teams have names that are meant to be clever, but probably aren't.



Ryan Potts
ryanpotts@hotmail.com

defensive team after my wife's cat because wherever I go, he's right there)

John Henson (UNC)
Skyler Mcbee
(Tennessee)
Ronald Norad (Butler)
Anthony Davis
(Kentucky)
Phil Pressey (Missouri)
My All-America Ballot

Thomas Robinson (Kansas)
Anthony Davis (Kentucky)
Tyler Zeller (UNC)
Pierre Jackson (Baylor)
Isaiah Canaan (Murray State)
Coach of the Year
Cuonzo Martin-Tennessee. Picked 11th in the preseason SEC poll and finished 2nd.

Honorary Dick Vitale All-Airport Team (most intimidating looking players regardless of skill)

Royce White (Iowa State)
Darius Johnson-Odom
(Marquette)

Jared Sullinger (Ohio State)
Carrick Felix (Arizona State)
Festus Ezeli (Vanderbilt)

Ryan Potts Memorial Tall Kid who thinks he's a guard Team (Tall players who shun the post and shoot jump shots)

The aptly named Ryan Kelly
(Duke)

Harrison Barnes (UNC)
John Shurna (Northwestern)
Robbie Hummel (Purdue)
Perry Jones III (Baylor)

Harold Arceneaux "You will learn about this guy in March" Team

Isaiah Canaan (Murray State)
Doug McDermott (Creighton)
Matt Dellavedova (St. Mary's)
Damien Lillard (Weber State)
Casper Ware (Long Beach State)
Hard Rock Café "All Overrated Team"

Harrison Barnes (UNC)
J'Covan Brown (Texas)
Jeffrey Taylor (Vanderbilt)
Seth Curry (Duke)
Perry Jones III (Baylor)
The "Jackson the Cat Pest Team" (Yes, I named the all



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• CONSERVATIVE POV

In memoriam: Andrew Breitbart (1969-2012)

Andrew Breitbart was known by some, unknown by many, but his work is known by anybody who has an interest in the world around him. Breitbart founded and ran the Big Journalism and Big Government blogs, which uncovered some interesting activities that you do know about.

In collaboration with Fox News, in 2009, Breitbart exposed the Association of Community Organizations Right Now (ACORN), where ACORN workers appeared to advise a young couple how to hide prostitution activities and avoid taxes. Videos recorded the sessions, occurring in several ACORN locations, were released on Breitbart's BigGovernment.com website from Sept. to Nov. 1009.

The US Census Bureau and the IRS ended contracts with the organization, and the U. S. Congress voted to suspend its funding to ACORN. Soon ACORN also lost most of its private funding, effectively closing the organization. Chalk one up for Andrew.

From the latimes.com:
One of his websites, Big Government.com, had caused a sensation when it posted lewd photos of a man that appeared to be U. S. Rep. Anthony Weiner, a firebrand liberal congressman from New York. Breitbart's move came after a suggestive photo of Weiner had been posted on the Democrat's Twitter account, which the congressman repeatedly said was the work of hackers, though had not offered any evidence.

Adding to the skepticism was Weiner who offered passionate defenses in a series of interviews but struggled to offer a clear explanation of whether the photo was of his body and how it could have ended up on twitter. The pressure built and Weiner opted for the guilty politician's traditional confessional – the news conference.

But Breitbart arrived at the news con-



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

ference and in a surreal scene, beat Weiner to the lectern. Angry that the congressman had tried to wriggle off the hook by implicating his work, Breitbart defended the legitimacy of his site's reporting and said he hoped Weiner would apologize for 'being complicit in a blame-the-messenger strategy' – which Weiner later did. Weeks later, Weiner resigned.

In a special election, he was replaced by a Republican (in a heavily Democrat District). Andrew 1, Anthony 0."

Breitbart used the Internet to ignite political scandal and expose what he saw as media bias, even if sometimes he had to edit the facts to do it. In a new media age, he argued that anyone with a laptop could reshape public discourse, and his takedown established him as a conservative media hero.

In an oddity, which occurred frequently in Breitbart's life, dailymail.com reports:

"Andrew Breitbart, the conservative firebrand and new media pioneer who died suddenly at just 43, had told friends he was poised to take his jihad against the Left deeper into the mainstream media with a regular show on CNN.

Last weekend, Breitbart told friends he was in early talks with CNN about a Crossfire-style show in which he would argue from the Right alongside former US House representative Anthony Weiner taking him on from the Left. Such a show would have been a blockbuster. In what was perhaps his finest hour, Breitbart was the man who ended the political career of Weiner by revealing that the married congressman had sent lewd photographs to young women via Twitter."

According to infowars.com: "In a stunning coincidence, it appears Andrew Breitbart suffered his untimely death just hours before he was set to release damning video footage that could have sunk Barack Obama's 2012 re-election campaign." Speaking to Lawrence Sinclair of Sinclair News, Breitbart said 'Wait til they

see what happens March 1st."

He repeated his intention to release the tape during his speech during his CPAC speech last month. 'I've got video from his college days that show you why racial division and class warfare are central to what hope and change was sold in 2008 – the videos are going to come out,' said Breitbart, adding that Obama would be vetted.

You don't have to be a conspiracy theorist to appreciate the downright weirdness of Breitbart announcing a major event to occur on March 1st, only for him to end up dying on that very date. He was officially pronounced dead at 12:19 am." Breitbart reportedly was walking near his home in Brentwood, CA, just after midnight when he collapsed. Emergency crews tried to revive him and rush him to the emergency room at the UCLA medical Center.

When Lawrence Sinclair called the hospital, they denied that anyone by that name had been admitted within the previous 72 hours.

... CONTROVERSY from page 3

OK'd any of them saying they would be happy with whomever I suggested to the commission.

"That being said, I make a motion to reappoint Lewis Penland and appoint Chris Hanners."

It looked like a vote was going to be taken, when Commissioner Ron Haven asked that the candidates be voted on separately.

The board agreed and Tate revised his motion. He made a motion to put Hanners in the seat Tate vacated upon appointment to the commission. It passed unanimously.

At that point Haven made a motion to appoint Bill Futral, but since Tate's motion was still on the floor concerning the reappointment of Penland it died for lack of a second.

Tate then repeated his motion to reappoint Penland. It passed 4-1 vote – with Haven dissenting.

•See CONTROVERSY page 9

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• HIGHLANDS SCHOOL SPORTS •

Lady Highlanders successful in Jamboree, fall to Franklin in soccer opener

By Ryan Potts

The Highlands Lady Highlander soccer team traveled to Asheville last week-end to face the Mitchell Lady Mountaineers and the Brevard Lady Blue Devils as part of the soccer season kickoff held annually in Asheville. Despite only playing with 10 players due to the Boston trip, the Lady Highlanders were able to have great success, beating Mitchell 3-0 on the

... CONTROVERSY from page 8

This term will be considered Penland's second 3-year-term. After that, he will have to sit off for one year before reapplying.

Hanners is starting his first 3-year-term and can be appointed for a second if he wants to stay on the board.

As per the new term limits voted on at the Feb. 14 meeting, Planning Board members can sit for two 3-year-terms and must take a year hiatus before reapplying for a seat.

In addition, Tuesday night the commission agreed to advertise vacancies on all its boards on the county's website rather than publishing vacancies in The Franklin Press.

As to term limits for all boards, commissioners asked County Attorney Chester Jones and County Manager Jack Horton to assemble a list of all boards and committees whose appointments and term limits aren't governed by state or federal statutes.

The list will be presented at the March 13 meeting and term limits for the remaining boards will be discussed at length.

Commissioners Ronnie Beale and Bobby Kuppers continue to remind the board that all boards and committees already have versions of term limits "because all term limits reside with the board of commissioners."

"If we are going to impose term limits on boards, we can't aim this only at the Planning Board," said Kuppers. "To make it fair we have to do this across the board as best we can even though it's a pain in the neck and will require more work of staff."

— Kim Lewicki

strength of goals from Emily Munger and Kirstyn Lamb and tying Brevard 1-1.

On Wednesday, the Lady Highlanders traveled to Franklin to face the Lady Panthers in the first regular season game of the 2012 year. The first half was a back and forth affair that saw the Lady Panthers dominate possession, but it was Highlands who missed out on the best scoring opportunity of the half as two Lady Highlanders missed an empty Panther goal for what would have been an early lead. After working to a draw in the first half, the Lady Panthers were able to take the lead on a long goal from outside the arc that just snuck under the crossbar.

Despite trailing 1-0, the Lady Highlanders were very much in the game until adversity struck in the form of poor officiating. Franklin was awarded a penalty kick due to what the center official termed a handball in the box. The line judge came over to the center referee to overrule the penalty, as there was clearly no foul, but the center official refused to defer and awarded the PK anyway which Franklin converted for a 2-0 lead. Later in the half, the same official refused to call interference as Lady

Highlander goalkeeper Taylor Hunter was plowed over by two Franklin players as they converted their third goal of the match for a 3-0 lead. Despite the bad luck, the Lady Highlanders kept fighting and generated a scoring chance in the final seconds, but Stephanie Smart's shot hit the post and the

Lady Highlanders finished on the wrong end of a 3-0 score.

Despite the score, there were many positive signs for the Lady Highlanders, and they will return from Spring Break to host Smoky Mountain on March 14th at 6PM.

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Highlands School students take on Boston

By Ryan Potts

A group of 24 Highlands School students traveled to Boston, Massachusetts last weekend as part of an educational trip put together by Highlands School Social Studies teacher Chris Green. The students were to depart Charlotte on Friday evening and fly to Boston via Detroit to stay for three nights in one of the nation's most historic cities.

While the students were excited to arrive in Boston, Mother Nature had other plans, causing a lengthy delay at Charlotte-Douglas International Airport. Thanks to the delay that they ended up in the Charlotte airport for over six hours. The delay also forced the group into staying overnight in Detroit, since they missed their connecting flight into Boston. Luckily, Delta Airlines put them up in a hotel.

The group finally arrived in Boston on Saturday afternoon where they began a walking tour of the legendary Freedom Trail, which included a visit to the Old North Church. Later, they visited Fenway Park, the home of the Boston Red Sox. Bad luck continued to follow them, as a small fire was discovered in the administrative offices at Fenway Park, forcing the park to be evacuated.

Despite yet another change of plans, the Highlanders were able to make the best of things by touring Boston on foot and exploring the Boston Science Museum. In the evening, the students attended a Harvard hockey game, in what was the first hockey experience for many of the students. The trip finished up with an evening visit to Legal Seafood, where everyone enjoyed the finest of Boston cuisine.

Despite the snafus, Chris Green said the trip was an excellent experience for the students. "The kids were terrific and they showed a tremendous amount of patience considering all of the delays and things that we went through. Anytime you spend that amount of time in an airport things can get interesting, but our kids handled it all very maturely and I think that they enjoyed the time we did get to spend in Boston."

Green also thanked fellow chaperones Ashly Coppage and Tracy Hedden for their assistance.

Senior Isaac Beavers said the trip was a "lot of fun" and that "it was a great experience to be able to go somewhere like Boston and to do it with your friends is even better."



Students walked the Freedom Trail, visited Fenway Park and the Boston Science Museum. Photos by Tracey Hedden



Highlands Area Upcoming Events PULL OUT

• Registration is now open for the 2012 summer nature day camps at the Highlands Nature Center. Five different camps are offered: "WOW! – a World of Wonder" (ages 4-6), "Amazing Animals" (ages 7-10), "NatureWorks" (ages 8-11), "Mountain Explorers" (ages 10-13), and "Junior Ecologists" (ages 11-14). Most camps are offered more than once during the summer. Sessions run from Tuesday to Friday each week. For complete schedules, costs, and other information, please call 828-526-2623 or visit www.wcu.edu/hbs.

Daily

• CORE classes at Mountain Fitness on Carolina Way. Tues., Thurs., Sat., 9:30; Mon., Wed.,

Thurs., 5:15. \$10 per class or ask about specials. Call 526-9083. (st. 6/9)

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 \$40 a month.

• Zumba at the Rec Park, 9:05a-10a. \$5 per calss. First class free. Call Mary Barbour for Franklin schedule: 828-342-2498.

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.

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.

Thursdays

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

• The Highlands Writers Group meets at 1 p.m. at the Hudson Library on Thursdays. Free writing exercises. Bring a seven-minute writing piece to read. Newcomers are welcome. Call Anne Doggett at 526 8009.

• Free Dinner at the Cashiers Community Center from 5-7 p.m. Mostly organic, healthy food. Donations accepted. Call 743-5706 for more information. Volunteers needed!

Thursdays - Sundays

• At Paoletti's, 15%-25% off promotions. Call 526-4906 for reservations.

Every Saturday through March

• The Art Room, 45 East Main St. in Franklin is having free Make & Take Classes from 10am to 12:30. Come make a Card...Ages 15 and up please! For More Information call Dianne 828-349-3777 or Robin 828-421-9891.

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.

Through March 10

• Highlands Little League will be having registration for the 2012 baseball season at the Highlands Recreation Center. If you would like to register, stop by the front desk at the Highlands Recreation Center and complete a registration form and medical release. Practices will begin approximately March 19th. The cost for the first child is \$50 and \$45 for each additional child. The fee includes hat, shirt and socks. Players are responsible for shoes and baseball pants. Registration is for ages 5 to 12 and the birthday cutoff date is April 30th. If you have any questions, contact Jerry Moore @ ejmoorej@yahoo.com or 828-482-2032.

Mon. - Thurs., March 12, 19, 22

• At The Bascom. Drawing Basics and Beyond. 10am - 12noon or 5:15 - 7:15pm. For the absolute beginner or as a refresher for skilled artists, discover a new sense of self and spirit enhance your observational skills and develop confidence and awareness. Explore drawing without making a lengthy or expensive commitment. In-

• See EVENTS page 12

Foxfire Boys to participate in March 11 worship service at First Presbyterian



The Foxfire Boys Bluegrass Group will be participating in the morning worship service at First Presbyterian Church at 11am on Sunday, March 11. All are welcome to attend.

Formed in the early 1980's, the Foxfire Boys grew out of the world renowned Foxfire organization. The group is based in Clayton, Ga. Over the years they have shared the stage with well known country, bluegrass, and folk artists. The group has made appearances on TNN and CMT television networks and performed at venues such as: The Grand Ole Opry, World's Fair, 1994 Olympics in Norway, 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, the Georgia High Museum, and the Georgia Governor's mansion. The group also performs

at numerous folk and art festivals throughout the United States.

The group continues to perform for public and private events throughout the region, including many local benefits. The Foxfire Boys have a passion for family, faith, and community which is demonstrated through their music.

Members of the group are: Wayne Gipson, bass and vocals; Dean English, banjo and vocals; Mike Hamilton, lead guitar; Tom Nixon, mandolin, fiddle, and vocals; and Filmer Kilby, harmonica, dobro, and vocals.

The church is located at the corner of Main and 5th Streets. Handicap entrances are located on 5th Street and on Church Street.

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PULL OUT

Highlands Area Upcoming Events

Erosion control training set for March 15



**By Michelle Price
Executive Director J-MCA**

On March 15, the Jackson-Macon Conservation Alliance is teaming up with the North Carolina State University's Soil Science Department and local sponsors to bring technical erosion control training to the community.

This is a unique opportunity in our area, because most training opportunities like this, happen "off the mountain" and require local business owners to invest more resources in travel and time to receive current information based on scientific research. Also it is a rare opportunity to be able to meet with technical experts in the field, who are able to answer your questions and provide a hands-on opportunity.

The field component will allow participants to actually practice proper installation of best practices including silt fences, drop inlets, baffles, wattles and ground cover. This program has resulted from a group planning effort led by the Jackson-Macon Conservation Alliance and funded by the Cullasaja Women's Outreach. The classroom presentation and field component will be instructed by representatives from the NCSU's Soil Science Department.

We encourage all people within the Highlands and Cashiers Community that actually install, inspect or design these types of erosion control measures to attend; so they may have an opportu-

nity to ensure these practices are properly installed. Proper installation of these best management practices is important to maximizing their potential to reduce sediment from leaving the disturbed area. Proper installation will also minimize the occurrence of notice of violations and maximize the protection of off-site property and surface water quality.

We are also seeking donations from local businesses to provide materials for this training event, such as wattles, ground cover, silt fence, staples and more. If you are interested in co-sponsoring this event by donating materials for our field training please contact J-MCA.

Attendees are encouraged to dress appropriately for the field training and the weather. Please bring your own hard hat and safety vest if you have one.

The Sediment and Erosion Control Training is scheduled for Thursday, March 15 at 9 am at the Albert Carlton Cashiers Community Library located on Frank Allen Road in Cashiers. Space is limited, pre-register is required for this event.

Scholarships are available for people that actually install erosion control measures within the Cashiers and Highlands area. To register for this event and for more information call J-MCA at 828-526-0890 x320 or email Anna at annav@j-mca.org. Registrations are due on or before Monday, March 12th.

structor: Knight Martorell. Levels: I & II. Tuition: \$100 members/\$135 non-members per month

Tues. & Thurs., March 8, 13, 15

• At The Bascom. Ceramics Beginning and Beyond, 1 – 3 pm or 5:15 – 7:15 pm. Begin your ceramics experience or take it to the next level by disappearing into a quiet, nurturing environment. Instructor: Frank Vickery. Levels: I & II Tuition: \$125 member/\$160 non-member per month.

Wed., March 14, 21, 28

• At The Bascom. Painting Basics and Beyond. 10am – 12noon. Enjoy the painting experience from inspiration, to design, to finished painting. An opportunity to create captivating works of art while learning or expanding your knowledge of the building blocks for application, design and color. Instructor: Robin Swaby Levels: I & II. Tuition: \$100 member/\$135 non-member per month

Thursday, March 8

• The Macon County Cancer Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 p.m. in the cafeteria of Angel Medical Center on Riverview Street in Franklin. March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Dr. Carter Davis, Founder of the Atlanta Gastroenterology Associates Group, will be the guest speaker. There will be free handouts, light refreshments, and a \$50 Ingles card will be given away. Everyone is welcome to attend. For more information, call 828-369-9221.

• Taize at Holy Family Lutheran Church at 5:30 p.m.

• Macon Valley Nursing and Rehabilitation Center Blood Drive, 3195 Old Murphy Road, Franklin, 12 pm to 4:30 pm. Call Dawn or Lisa at 524-7806 for more information or to schedule an appointment. All presenting donors are automatically entered into a drawing for a pair of Delta Airline Tickets!

• The League of Women Voters of Macon County will host Tommy Jenkins, director of the Macon County Economic Development Commission. Mr. Jenkins will speak on economic development plans and projects for our county. The meeting will be held in Tartan Hall in Franklin. Lunch is available at noon—call 371-0527 for reservations, or email lwvmacon@wild-dog-mountain.info. The program will begin at 12:15. The public is invited.

• The March meeting of The Western North Carolina Woodturners Club will meet on Thursday at 6 PM at the Blue Ridge School, in Glenville. Drive to the back of the school to the woodworking shop. Visitors are always welcomed. The club meets every second Thursday at 6 P.M., March through November.

• LOOKING FOR MUSICIANS for First Friday Fest Rock House in Downtown Clayton, May – October from 6-8 p.m. Will pay set night fee plus tips. Call 706-982-1284 or drop off Demos at Fromage & Other Fine Foods or mail to CMBA, Post Office

Box 25, Clayton, GA 30525, or e-mail Demo Link to werk@windstream.net. All demos must be received by March 8. Please include Group Name, Contact Name, Phone Number & E-mail.

• Fundraising banquet for wild turkey conservation at 6 p.m. at The Dillard House Conference Center. Tickets are \$55. Hosted by the Tallulah Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation. For tickets are information call 706-947-3016.

Friday, March 9

• Angel Medical Center Blood Drive, 120 Riverview Street, Franklin, 8 am to 5 pm. Please call 369-4166 for more information or to schedule an appointment. Walk-Ins Welcome but appointments preferred! All presenting donors are automatically entered into a drawing for a pair of Delta Airline Tickets!

Saturday, March 10

• Chili Cook Off at the Community Building 6:30-9:30 p.m. To enter the contest call 526-5841.

• At The Bascom. Discovering the Image, 10am – 4pm. Whether you are a veteran painter or have always wanted to hold a brush in your hand and make a mark on the canvas, this class can benefit you. Diane's approach to painting is one of pure visual discovery from the first mark to the last! These one-day workshops can open your eye to discovering the image as you work, take your past habits and formulas, and set out on a journey of discovering your own way with the image. Instructor: Diane McPhail. Levels: I, II & III. Tuition: \$75 member/\$110 non-member per class

• At The Bascom. Art Cinema. Sit back and enjoy our weekly feature presentation "Craft in America" 2 pm.

• Red Velvet Cake War Challenge at The Dillard Playhouse (same building as Dillard City Hall). \$5 entry fee. \$100 Grand Prize, plus 4 tickets to the play! \$25 Runner-Up Prize, plus 2 tickets to the play! Cakes & recipes should be dropped off 10am-12. Judging will take place noon to 2 pm Winners will be called following judging to pick up Prizes! We will publish your recipe in our play program! For more information email brianlynnstalcup@yahoo.com

Sunday, March 11

• The Foxfire Boys Bluegrass Group will be participating in the morning worship service at First Presbyterian Church at 11 am on Sunday. All are welcome to attend. The church is located at the corner of Main and 5th Streets. Handicap entrances are located on 5th Street and on Church Street.

March 12-April 12

• USDA Farm Service Agency Macon County is having a four-week Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general signup, beginning March 12 and ending April 6. CRP has a 25-year legacy of successfully protecting the nation's natural resources through voluntary participation, while providing significant economic and environmental benefits to

Highlands Area Upcoming Events

rural communities across the United States. For more information on CRP and other FSA programs, visit the Macon County FSA Service Center at 189 Thomas Heights Road, Franklin, NC. Or call (828) 524-3175 Visit www.fsa.usda.gov for additional information.

Tuesdays beginning March 13

• NAMI offers Peer-to-Peer Recovery Education Course. NAMI Appalachian South, the local affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is offering a 10 week education class in Franklin on Tuesdays, starting March 13, 6:30-8:30. This is a nationally recognized course designed for individuals living with the challenge of mental illness. The course covers the major mental illnesses, treatments, coping strategies, relapse prevention, recovery and wellness in a confidential setting. There is no charge. Pre-registration is required. For more information or to register contact: Paul 524-9133 or Hank 342-34789.

Tuesday, March 13

• At the Hudson Library, the move "The Big

• See **EVENTS** page 14

Eckerd College Concert Choir and Eckerd Ringers to perform in March 18 Concert



The Eckerd College Concert Choir and the Eckerd Ringers will perform in a concert at 3pm on Sunday, March 18 at First Presbyterian Church. The groups will also participate in the 11:00 worship service that morning. The concert choir and ringers are directed by Dr. Marion Smith, who serves as Professor of Music and Director of Choral Music at Eckerd College. Dr. Smith received his Ph.D. from Washington University.

The Eckerd Concert Choir is open to the vocal amateur as well as the music major and performs on and off campus and tours each spring. One of the goals of the choir is to provide each singer a complete musical experience within the framework of a liberal arts education. The Concert Choir and Eckerd Ringers have made a number of International tours including a tour to England with performances in Oxford,

York, Canterbury, and London; the People's Republic of China, Italy, Spain, and more.

Formed in 1990, The Eckerd Ringers is an ensemble of twelve ringers. Membership is open to all students. The Eckerd Ringers play on five octaves of Schulmerich handbells and five octaves of Suzuki handchimes. The Eckerd Ringers play a variety of music ranging from arrangements of familiar hymns and other well known works to original compositions written especially for bells and chimes. The Eckerd Ringers appear in concert with the Concert Choir throughout the academic year.

Since Eckerd College (formerly Florida Presbyterian College) opened its doors, it has earned a reputation for creating new and better opportunities for learning. Eckerd has been consistently rated among the foremost of American colleges and universities. The college looks for superior meth-

ods of educating its students, not in order to be different but to offer a more rewarding and useful educational experience.

Eckerd College is located in St. Petersburg, Florida, and was named after philanthropists, the late Jack and Ruth Eckerd, long time seasonal residents of Highlands. Dr. Donald Eastman, III has served as president of the college since 2001. He and his wife, Christine, are seasonal residents of Highlands, and attend First Presbyterian Church.

Everyone is cordially invited to attend the morning worship service as well as the afternoon concert, which will take place in the sanctuary at First Presbyterian Church. The church is located at the corner of Main and 5th Streets. Handicap entrances are located on Church Street and on 5th Street.



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JOHN CARTER
Starting March 9th
Coming Soon
21 Jump Street
Wrath of the Titans
Act of Valour

PULL OUT

Highlands Area Upcoming Events

Year" Tuesday at 4 pm. Steve Martin, Jack Black, and Owen Wilson headline the cast of this comedy. The story is about two bird enthusiasts who try to defeat the cocky, cutthroat world record holder in a year-long bird-spotting competition. The Highlands Plateau Audubon Society is offering the film for your enjoyment. There is no charge to watch the movie, and there just might be free popcorn offered as well.

• Come and listen to the Irish Blarney Tales and Tales of Spring stories at the Story Swap on Tuesday at 7 pm, at the Ugly Dog Pub at 294 S. Fourth St. in Highlands. If you have a special 3-7

minute blarney or spring story to tell or read, sign up at the pub or call 369-1927. Note – Our winter start time is a half hour earlier!

Thursday, March 15

• Sediment & Erosion Control Training: Thursday at 9 am at the Cashiers Library. Classroom presentation and hands-on field component by NCSU Soil Science Department. Learn how to properly install silt fences, drop inlets, baffles, wattles and ground cover. Earthmovers, Graders, Contractors, Landscapers, Architects, Designers, Engineers and Inspectors are encouraged to attend. The cost is \$20 for materials and a boxed lunch. Pre-registration required, call J-MCA at 828-526-0890 x320

OR annav@j-mca.org to register and for more information.

• Taize at the Highlands United Methodist Church at 5:30 p.m.

Friday, March 16

• An American Red Cross Adult CPR/AED course will be conducted through Macon County Public Health. The course will be held on Friday March 16th from 9:30 a.m. until 12:30 pm at Macon County Public Health located at 1830 Lakeside Drive. Participants must pre-register and pre-pay at the Macon County Public Health Center by Monday, March 12. For more information on class fees and to pre-register please call Melissa at 349-2459.

Sat. - Fri., March 17-30

• At The Bascom. From Mud to Art Highlands High School Ceramics, Landing Gallery. Explore with the students as they not only demonstrate their proficiency in pottery but their understanding of the science and chemistry that makes it happen. Student work and an explanation of clay bodies, firing and glazing will be on view. Now in its third year, the High School Ceramics Class is an ongoing partnership between Highlands School and The Bascom.

Sat. & Sun., March 17 – 18

• At The Bascom. Everything Kitchen. 10 am – 4 pm. You can make those every day happenings more fun by creating your own custom pieces to use in the kitchen. Make anything and everything you can imagine. Instructor: Frank Vickery. Levels: I, II & III. Tuition: \$175 member/\$210 non-member.

Sat., March 17

• At The Bascom. From Mud to Art Highlands

High School Ceramics Opening Reception. 5 – 7pm

• At The Bascom. Art Cinema. Sit back and enjoy our weekly feature presentation "Secrets of Stonehenge" 2 pm.

Sunday, March 18

• The Eckerd College Concert Choir and the Eckerd Ringers will perform in a concert at 3 pm on Sunday at First Presbyterian Church. The groups will also participate in the 11 a.m. worship service that morning. The concert choir and ringers are directed by Dr. Marion Smith, who serves as Professor of Music and Director of Choral Music at Eckerd College. Dr. Smith received his Ph.D. from Washington University. Everyone is cordially invited to attend the morning worship service as well as the afternoon concert, which will take place in the sanctuary at First Presbyterian Church. The church is located at the corner of Main and 5th Streets. Handicap entrances are located on Church Street and on 5th Street.

Mon. & Wed., March 19, 21, 26, 28

• At The Bascom. Ceramic Sculpture. 12noon – 2pm. This is a great class for all interested in learning how to construct sculptures in clay. Instructor: Colette Clark. Levels: I & II. Tuition: \$125 member/\$160 non-member per month.

Tuesday, March 20

• Macon County Public Library Blood Drive, 149 Siler Farm Road, Franklin, 10 am to 7 pm. Please call 524-3600 for more information or to schedule an appointment. All presenting donors are automatically entered into a drawing for a pair of Delta Airline Tickets!

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Location: **Highlands Pharmacy
& Main Street Pharmacy**

Contact: **HIGHLANDS POLICE (828)526-9431**

For more information visit www.ncsafekids.org or www.1700-nc.org

Family-friendly benefit at Satolah VFD

Neighbors, friends and family from Rabun, Macon and Oconee counties will gather Saturday, March 31 at the annual bluegrass-and-barbecue fundraiser put on by the Satolah, Georgia, volunteer fire department, this year to benefit fellow firefighter Joe Munger and family.

The volunteer firefighters and the hard-working women of the Station 8 auxiliary will begin serving food at 4 p.m., with the music starting around 6 p.m.

Chief James Reed is hoping for a big turnout, as this family-friendly benefit always highlights the coming of spring (and the official start of the trout season) in this part of the tri-state area. "We hope everyone will mark their calendars, and do their best to help," Reed said.

Here's the line-up:

• Food plates will include your choice of a smoked pork barbecue or grilled chicken, served with baked beans, Cole

slaw, applesauce, a roll and soft drink (\$7) or a combo plate with both chicken and pork (\$10). Children's plates, (\$4). Those with a real appetite also can order a whole butt (\$35) if pre-ordered by Tuesday, March 27. Call (828) 371-0722 to pre-order.

• Then, starting around 6 p.m., get set for some mighty high-and-lonesome bluegrass music that will set hearts a-thumping and toes a-tapping.

• The ladies' auxiliary also will auction off its delicious homemade cakes and there will be a raffle for a \$300 cash prize and other valuable items.

The station is located 3.5 miles south of the Georgia-North Carolina line on state Route 28 (the Highlands-Walhalla Road) and about 2 miles from the Route 28 intersection with Warwoman Road. The public is invited -- and bring all your friends!

• HEALTH MATTERS •

Lasik Candidacy

By Richard Blue, M.D.

In the ever-changing field of medicine and in an age when there is an infinite amount of information instantly accessible, the medical community faces the constant challenge of dealing with the propagation of myths and misinformation of all kinds. With regards to my own chosen field of medicine, Ophthalmology, and more specifically the LASIK procedure, I have conversations with patients nearly every day in which the patient has been given some kind of misinformation regarding their particular candidacy for LASIK. Some of the most common reasons patients are told that they are not a LASIK candidate are that they have astigmatism; their prescription is too high or low; there may be age restrictions; they have cataracts; they are told LASIK can cause scar tissue; they are told that they'll probably end up back in glasses anyway; or, they are simply told they are not a candidate and not given a reason.

There are indeed rare occasions when I have a patient who may have some condition that makes him or her a less than ideal candidate. The good news

is that, for experienced LASIK practitioners, today's incredible level of diagnostic technology allows us to easily identify that rare person who is not an ideal LASIK candidate. It must be understood, though, that this person is indeed rare. The vast majority of my patients who report having been told they are not a candidate turn out not only to be candidates, but are among my happiest patients.

So why are so many patients told that they are not candidates? Since it wouldn't be a productive exercise to engage in speculation, my best response to this question is simply to arm patients with the right questions to ask to form their own conclusions. Is the person who made the claim a Medical Doctor who specializes in LASIK and therefore uniquely qualified to judge your candidacy? Does this person use the specialized level of equipment and technology needed to make an accurate judgment of your LASIK candidacy? And finally, does this person and the industry he or she represents have anything to gain or lose by your having the LASIK procedure? Once these answers are

• See HEALTH MATTERS page 16

LASIK MYTH # 26

"I've been told I am not a candidate for LASIK because I have Astigmatism..."

Far too often, people are given misinformation about LASIK. To view short videos of Dr. Blue explaining why, despite what you may have been told, it's very likely that you ARE a candidate for LASIK, please visit www.bluelasergroup.com/myths



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... HYBRID continued from page 1

to the pure Council-Manager form, then these are the steps you need to take," he said.

Evidently, about three years ago, the town neglected to amend its charter and ordinance in the proper order – first the charter then the ordinance. Highlands amended the ordinance first and was proceeding to amend the charter when Com-

... HEALTH MATTERS from page 15

found, patients can usually understand why LASIK myths have been perpetrated, keeping them in glasses and contacts unnecessarily.

As medical doctors, it's not our job to convince patients to have a particular procedure or not. Instead, our duty is to give our patients the best facts and information we can based on our knowledge, experience, technology and our analysis of each individual patient's situation. Most often, LASIK is a great option for those who seek to end their dependence on glasses and contacts. In rare cases, it is not. It's my job to accurately discern the difference and give you all the best information you need to make your own decision.

missioner Gary Drake turned the tables at the Feb. 7 meeting.

Commissioner Drake, who has pushed for the standard Council-Manager form from the start, said a Local Act to make the hybrid form currently in place "legal" would take a unanimous vote — not the 3-2 vote taken last year. He and Commissioner Larry Rogers voted against the form.

Drake said he had spoken to Senator Jim Davis – Highlands' steward at the state level – who said he would not push a Local Act for a hybrid form through without 100% agreement on the Town Board.

When interviewed, Senator Davis said "I left local government because I didn't like to be micro-managed so I understand this and this is Highlands' problem," he said.

Even though representatives from the School of Government said Local Acts are often sought and successful at the state level, Davis said in his eyes a majority vote of 3-2 wasn't enough to push for a Local Act for a hybrid form of government.

Dotson asked Coward why a Local Act couldn't be considered with a 3-2 vote when it represented the wishes of the majority of the board and the citizens.

He said that's what Senator Davis wants and said "That's the difference between a democracy and a republic. You were elected to represent the people," said Cow-

ard. "We don't have a system where the people vote on every issue that comes before the board."

Dotson was referring the to public hearings last year where the majority of the citizens present wanted the hybrid Council-Manager form – which passed with the 3-2 vote.

Meanwhile, when Commissioner Amy Patterson asked Coward if Highlands was operating legally he said he was deferring all opinions as to legality about Highlands' form of government to the School of Government. However, over the last three years he has said that he didn't agree with the School.

So, the 3-2 vote taken Feb. 7 to pursue the avenues necessary to align Highlands' ordinance with the charter with Commissioners Patterson and John Dotson dissenting, needed a second vote to move to the next step.

Tuesday night the vote was taken again, but just concerning amending the ordinance applying to the Police Chief and the Stormwater Administrator. Changing verbiage in the ordinance pertaining to the Zoning Administrator takes a public hearing which is scheduled at the March 20 meeting.

Commissioner Brian Stiehler made the motion to proceed with amending the ordinance to align it with the charter and Commissioner Eric Pierson seconded the

motion with this statement:

"I wasn't here through all this, so I'm starting from square one and where we go from here, that's to be determined."

Once again the vote was 3-2 with Commissioners Patterson and Dotson dissenting. Mayor David Wilkes broke the tie since Commissioner Drake was absent.

Nevertheless, Commissioner Dotson wanted a statement in the record.

"We passed this 18 months ago and thought we were moving in the direction voted on by the majority of the Town Board. We knew we had some housekeeping to do and seemed to be moving in that direction until a phone call was made ... I'm not sure in my mind we are illegal, it's a situation of what came first the chicken or the egg? I think that based on the public hearing we had, the citizens of Highlands expressed the type of government they preferred," he said.

Since the required two years under a new form of government is up, Highlands' can at any time opt to change its form of government to a standard form that would not require Senate intervention or a Local Act. Those forms are the Mayor-Council form or the Mayor-Council-Administrator form which served Highlands for years.

Citizens are encouraged to turn out for the public hearing on the matter at the March 20 Town Board meeting at 7 p.m.

– Kim Lewicki

State-of-the-art Osteoporosis Screenings

State-of-the-art bone health assessments are now available at HCH. The Hologic Discovery Bone Densitometry System provides bone density testing for the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis, a bone disease that can result in fracture, chronic back pain and deformity.

For more information regarding bone density screenings, please call (828) 526-1450.



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www.highlandscashiershospital.org

*"Do not pray for easy lives; pray to be stronger.
Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers;
pray for powers equal to your tasks.
Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle,
but you yourself shall be a miracle.
Every day you shall wonder at yourself,
at the richness of life which has come to you
by the grace of God."*

*Phillips Brooks (1835 – 1893)
Episcopal Bishop of Massachusetts*

By Rev. Bruce Walker

Episcopal Church of the Incarnation

Being new to the community, I have much to learn. There are so many interesting people and fascinating places to explore and get to know. The possibilities for life here are exciting to contemplate. I have only been here a short time, and I already know that Highlands is great place to live, move and have my being.

Generally, my family has been met with exceeding hospitality, and generosity of spirit. The kindness that many people have shown is beyond anything that I could have imagined. We are in the midst of Lent, but it still seems like Christmas.

Even so, I know that there is a reason for me being here, and the call to ministry is not to be denied. I know there is work to be done. With this in mind, I am engaging life here both inside and outside the church I now call home, the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation.

My impression to date is that the people here genuinely care for each other, and most are working to create a community that is good and just and true. I pray that I might be given the strength and the will to contribute to the greater good, and to join the ranks of those who call Highlands their home.

One way to contribute is to break down any walls that separate us. Mind you, I haven't seen many, but in any community, they are usually there. Therefore, it might be good for all of us to consider how we are contributing to the common good in our community. Whether we have lived here forever, or only for a season, we might ask ourselves, "what contribution am I making to enrich the lives of those I share my life with?"

Maybe we could start with our religious community. We have some outstanding clerics in our town, and the people they represent look to them for guidance and direction in dealing with each other. This season of Lent would be an appropriate time to reflect on our common life and seek ways that we might interject greater religious harmony and tolerance that would lead us to a more full and meaningful coexistence.

Perhaps we could focus on what is true and good among us, which to me would start with the understanding that we are all created from the same stuff, and born out of the same God. In truth, we cannot dishonor our sisters and brothers without bringing dishonor on ourselves; likewise we can only honor ourselves when we honor our brothers and sisters.

Harmony is created out of an understanding that we are all one, and what we do affects those around us. We cannot help another without helping ourselves, and we cannot hurt another without hurting ourselves. Peace begins at home, and within our own hearts as we make peace with ourselves.

Lent is really about drawing us back into this peace, and into the loving arms of God. So, as we practice our disciplines of prayer, meditation, fasting and almsgiving, we do so with hopeful anticipation that some real change for the better will occur within us, making us stronger and more fit for the journey.

As we are faithful in these things, we will wonder at the miracle we have become. This way, Easter will truly mean something - new hope, new life, and new blessing! I wonder at the richness of life that has come to me, by the grace of God.

John 3:16

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

Proverbs 3:5

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
Sundays: 10 a.m. – Worship
Holy Communion 1st Sunday of the month
Wednesdays: 9 a.m. Healing and Prayer w/Holy Communion

CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

Rector: Jim Murphy, 252-671-4011
Worshipping at the facilities of Whiteside Presbyterian Church,
Cashiers

Sun.: Holy Communion - 9 a.m.; Adult Forum - 10:45 at Buck's
Coffee Cafe, Cashiers

Mon.: Bible Study & Supper at homes - 6 p.m.

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

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

CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Jim Kinard
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
Wednesdays -- 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. HS
Wed.: 6pm: CBC University Program

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

526-2968 • Reverend Bruce Walker
Sunday: Education for children & adults and choir rehearsal
beginning at 9:00am. Holy Eucharist Rite II Service held at 10:30am
in the Main Nave of the Church.

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

Tuesday: 8 a.m. Men's Cursillo Group; Bible Study 10:30 a.m.
Reverend Howard L'Enfant

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

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Dr. Charles Harris, Pastor • 526-4153
Sun.: Worship 10:45 a.m.; School – 9:30 a.m.; Evening Worship
6:30

Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m.,
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

GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

(Off Franklin/Highlands Rd)
Rev. Carson Gibson
Sunday School – 10 am, Worship Service – 11 am
Bible Study – 6 pm

HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Randy Reed, Pastor
828-421-9172 • 165 S. Sixth Street
Sundays: Worship – 11

HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson
670 N. Fourth Street (next to the Highlands Civic Center)
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.; Worship 10:50 a.; Youth Group 5:30 p.
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 Roy Lowe, (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 Big Ridge Baptist Church, 4224 Big Ridge
Road (4.5 miles from NC 107)

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: – Sun: 11 a.m.; Sat: 4 p.m.; Thurs & Fri.: 9 a.

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 • 526-3212
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 10:45 a.m.; Worship – 6
p.m.

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

SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

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

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

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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 8th - 12th grades meet the 2nd Sundays 5 - 7:30 p.m

WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

... NC PRE-K continued from page 1

ing when they enter school.”
Luckily, on Thursday, March 1, following public outcry and protests from school officials, the legislative House Select Committee on Early Childhood Education Improvement (Committee) backed away from the controversial proposal, which was to fully privatize state-funded preschools.

In North Carolina, more than half the students in prekindergarten are in public school programs. The effort to restrict pre-kindergarten to private settings was launched after private providers told legislators that school districts that run the program favor their own classrooms over child care centers.

Outcry that turned the tide included statistics from educators who now say the Committee demonstrated respect for the democratic process when it responded to public comment. It has since submitted and

passed a revised recommendation for NC Pre-K, which includes more research.

The original legislation proposed would have reduced access to NC Pre-K based on income. Currently, 4-year olds from a family of four with an income of around \$50,000 are eligible for the NC Pre-K program. The Committee’s proposal would have lowered those guidelines to \$22,000 so basically a single mother with three children making \$23,000 would not be able to enroll her children.

Research has shown that high quality, pre-k education programs are effective in preparing students for kindergarten and boosting their academic achievement through third grade and beyond. That is why educators believe NC Pre-K should continue to be an important part of public education.

The proposal as initially drafted would

cut off nearly 10,000 children from a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to receive high-quality early learning at a critical time in their brain’s physical development and as they seek to reach key educational milestones, said NC State Board of Education Chairman Dr. William C. Harrison.

“The privatization proposal would undermine a decade of work to connect pre-kindergarten through effective partnerships across pre-K, K-12 and higher education to efficiently, and in a results-based way, educate all young North Carolinians for future success,” said Harrison. “Also, we were dismayed that the House Select Committee would want to divest from one of the most proven strategies to build economic opportunity in our state.”

An example of the language from the original draft piece of legislation includes: “Beginning July 1, 2013, local school administrative units (public school districts) shall not serve as contract administrators for the NC Pre-K program. It is the intent of the General Assembly that NC Pre-K classrooms be provided within licensed private child care centers exclusively.”

“The Committee’s plan to phase out NC Pre-K from all public school classrooms conflicts with the following core values of transparency, access and quality, and it is clearly not in the best interest of the students and families the program was designed to serve,” said Harrison.

He continues: “In regards to transparency, by removing all pre-k programs from public schools, lawmakers would be funneling more taxpayer dollars to for-profit, private daycare centers. Some of these organizations are focused more on the bottom line than the children served. To keep profits coming in, some private centers will cut corners and sacrifice the high quality academic program all NC Pre-K programs should provide. In addition, the Committee members failed to consider input from local school districts (many of which already run successful NC Pre-K programs) when they were drafting their report and they have not yet shared any research on which they based their recommendations.

“In terms of quality, the legislation proposed in this report would reduce the number of licensed teachers working in our pre-k programs. Right now, all pre-k teachers working in public schools are appropriately licensed while the percentage of licensed teachers working in private centers is about 30%. Currently 51% of children enrolled in NC Pre-K are served in public school settings, so pushing public schools out of this equation will reduce the percentage of licensed teachers working in these programs to unacceptably low levels,” said Harrison.

The Committee has now agreed to take some of these concerns into account and slow down the process of restructuring NC Pre-K. Over the next few weeks and months, the central question of what poverty looks like and who experiences it will be at the core of the discussion over NC Pre-K’s future.

In a unanimous vote, the Committee voted to send multiple recommendations to the General Assembly for consideration instead.

Recommendations include a commitment to continue funding and monitoring early childhood programs, establishing criteria to determine which kids should be eligible for the programs, and reaffirming public and private childcare provider participation in the programs.

These recommendations will now be given to the full General Assembly as lawmakers work to continue to find cost saving measures within the pre-kindergarten system, because as usual, it all comes down to money.

Meanwhile, Gov. Bev Perdue says her administration will create 2,000 additional slots this year in NC Pre-K classrooms across North Carolina.

She has identified \$9.3 million that will allow the additional at-risk 4-year-olds to attend NC Pre-K. The additional funding will come from child care subsidy funds on a one-time basis to meet the urgent need of at-risk children who are not currently served by NC Pre-K.

The children would attend NC Pre-K from mid-March through mid-August, at which point, they will enter kindergarten. Local administrators have a process in place to determine which children will be placed in Pre-K programs.

Each year, approximately 67,000 at-risk four year olds in NC are eligible for the program. Current funding provides service for approximately 24,700 children.

The Department of Public Instruction released the results of two studies that have found that pre-k programs implemented in public schools perform better than programs in private centers.

Its 2011 analysis based on a random sample of More-at-Four (NC Pre-K) classrooms for three cohorts of children, 2003-04, 2005-06 and 2007-08, found that teachers with a least a BA coupled with a Birth-Kindergarten license caused greater student learning gains on assessments of essential literacy skills than teachers without this level of education and there are more of them in the public schools as compared to the private sector.

— Kim Lewicki

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• Biz/ORGANIZATION NEWS •

Macon County EDC announces BizWeek 2012

The Macon County Economic Development Commission has announced details of the upcoming BizWeek 2012 to be held April 9 to 12. BizWeek is a celebration of business, industry and entrepreneurship in Macon County.

"The Macon County EDC and our partners have several events planned during this celebration," said Tommy Jenkins, Director of the Macon County EDC. "Each event is designed to show our appreciation for all our businesses, both large and small, that are part of the fabric of Macon County's economic community."

The first event, slated for Tuesday, April 10, is an Entrepreneur Networking Night to be held at the Rathskeller in downtown Franklin. Those attending will have the opportunity to meet and hear Pam Lewis, the Director of Entrepreneurship for the Asheville Chamber of Commerce.

"Pam's forte is working to support and attract individuals who either want to start companies or relocate their small businesses," Jenkins continued. "We're sure her remarks and one-on-one con-

versations will be very helpful to those budding entrepreneurs who attend."

Then on Wednesday, April 11 nationally known speaker and author Tim Dannelly can be heard from 9 a.m. to noon at Southwestern Community College's Macon Campus. Dannelly will speak on the art of salesmanship.

"We're appreciative of SCC for joining with the Macon County EDC to bring Tim Dannelly for our BizWeek event," said Jenkins. "He has more than 40 years experience in the areas of sales, public relations and broadcasting and we know that anyone involved in sales can learn from this master of the art."

The BizWeek celebration concludes on Thursday, April 12 with the annual EDC banquet, this year featuring keynote speaker Keith Crisco, Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Commerce. The banquet will be held at 6 p.m. in the fellowship hall of Holly Springs Baptist Church.

"We are excited to have Secretary Crisco come to the area to share his insights on business and commerce in North Carolina," Jenkins concluded.

All events are free of charge. However, space is limited and pre-registration is required.

You can register online for both the Entrepreneur Networking Night and EDC Banquet by visiting www.maconedc.com.

To register for the Tim Dannelly seminar, contact Tommy Dennison, Business and Industry Training Coordinator for Southwestern Community College by calling 828.306.7019 or email t_dennison@southwesterncc.edu.

... LETTERS continued from page 2

like a board, to pass the buck.

Financing the new position would come from existing budget lines. We already pay a town manager a six-figure salary with benefits and perks. By eliminating the salaries of the mayor, commissioners, manager and throwing in a few more thousand, we could have a salary befitting a CEO of about \$160,000! At that level we would be compensating the CEO close to the level of a US Congressman. There are always former congressmen out of work. Encourage one of them to run for Highlands CEO. If a former congressman was elected, the town could then be in the federal earmark stream. The CEO could use past DC connections and lobby for Highlands. I would suggest a federal grant to subsidize electric power rates in towns over 4,000 feet above sea level with a population under 1,000. What a way to solve our high electric rate problem!

Now some may think this is a preposterous proposal that Raleigh would never

• See LETTERS page 21

Quin recipient of Duke award



On Tuesday, March 6, Hillrie Quin received the Duke Volunteer of the Year award from Fred Alexander of Duke Power. Quin was recognized for his work on the Highlands Greenway system over the past five years. While accepting the award he said: "I am proud to accept this award on behalf of all the volunteers who have worked on the Greenway." Over the years Quin and his crew of volunteers have resurrected and expanded the Greenway system by improving trails, building bridges and steps thereby making the system safe and passable. He and volunteers are pictured with the Chamber of Commerce staff.

• Salons & Spas •

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CLASSIFIEDS

... LETTERS continued
from page 19

approve. But on second thought, there is a political trend to cutback and shrink government. What would we be doing? Cutting back government and making it efficient.

Is there an even better solution? Well, we could go back to the town administrator form of government. Under that system the Town Commissioners would have direct oversight of the operation of this small town. The Town Board can implement this change with a simple majority vote. No unanimous vote and an approval from Raleigh would be necessary.

Patrick Taylor
Town of Highlands Resident

Dancing with the stars

Dear Editor,

On Friday night, February 17th, I attended an event at the Jackson County Early College. It was a dance presented for "Special Needs People." The audience for this remarkable presentation was from pre-school to seniors – and every age in between.

Two ladies – Cindy Ellis and Gloria Painter – put on this event. I cannot say enough wonderful things about them, their efforts, the festive decorations, the delicious food, and the excellent DJ. A splendid time was had by all, the proof being in the smiles of all involved.

Other than the Special Olympics, very little is done for people with special needs. Another such event will be coming up in the future – watch your paper – and I encourage you to give it your strongest support.

Pat Griffin, Highlands
Proud grandmother of a special needs child

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• POLICE & FIRE •

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Highlands PD log entries from Feb. 28. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor, or public officials have been used.

Feb. 28

• At 12:11 p.m., officers responded to an accident at a residence on Brooks Lane where a vehicle hit a house.

• At 3:10 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on Pierson Drive.

Feb. 29

• At 1:15 a.m., a call possible drunk driver was reported on Satulah Ridge Road.

• At 5:05 p.m., a suspicious vehicle was reported near Regions Bank.

March 2

• At 4:35 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle

accident in the RBC Centura parking lot. Subsequently, Freddy Ruis Ruis, 37, of Highlands, was arrested for driving with a fictitious license and expired license plates.

• At 7:20 p.m., officers conducted a welfare check at a residence on Oak Street.

March 3

• At 5:24 p.m., officers conducted a welfare check at a residence on Dogwood Drive.

March 5

• At 9:32 p.m., a suspicious vehicle was reported on Sassy Lane. Unfounded.

March 6

• At 4:50 p.m., a suspicious sound was reported at a residence on Harris Drive. It was a septic alarm.

• At 11:20 p.m., a suspicious vehicle was reported

parked on US 64.

• During the week, police officers responded to 5 alarms and issued 12 citations.

Highlands F&R Dept. log entries from Feb. 28 Feb. 28

• At 12:13 p.m., the dept. responded to an accident on Brooks Lane where a vehicle drove into a house causing severe damage.

• At 4:36 p.m., the dept. responded to an alarm at a residence at VZ-Top. It was set off by workers.

March 1

• At 2:31 a.m., the dept. responded to a vehicle accident on US 64 west with minor injuries.

• At 6:20 p.m, the dept. responded to a structure fire on Russell Ridge Road. No one was home. Total loss.

HIGHLANDS. Please apply in person at 24 Clubhouse Trail. (828)526-5251. (st. 2/15)

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• BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NEWS •

Rotary bingo benefits Boy Scouts



The Rotary Club of Highlands partnered with Highlands Boy Scouts to sponsor Bingo on March 1. All proceeds went to support our local Boy Scout troop. Martha Parish won the Super Bingo game and took home \$100. She is shown collecting her winnings from Rotarian and Boy Scout leader Tay Bronaugh and our local Boy Scouts.



Candidate Ethan Wingfield addresses the audience.

The Macon County Republican Party held it's 2012 Republican Congressional Forum on Saturday, March 3, at the Community Building in Franklin. About 100 people attended. Each of the six congressional candidates attending spoke for five minutes and then answered questions from the audience. Candidates attending were Spence Campbell, Jeff Hunt, Mark Meadows, Vance Patterson, Kenny West and Ethan Wingfield. The event opened with the local Marine Corps League Color Guard presenting the colors, Vietnam and Marine Corp Veteran (USMC) Jim Basey leading the pledge. The event was co-sponsored by the Gem Country Republican Women's Club.

Precinct meeting features candidate Cecil Bothwell



A Town Hall meeting for Cecil Bothwell was held at the home of Jan and Farrel Zehr on Friday evening, February 24. in Highlands. Pictured from left are: Democrat Princint Vice Chair Faviola Olvera, Asheville City Councilman and candidate for US House of Representatives District 11 Cecil Bothwell, Democrat Precinct Chair Karen Hawk, and Ben Utely, Macon County Democrat Chairman.

February Rotary scholars



The Rotary Club of Highlands honored the February Highlands School Scholars of the Month at its February 28 meeting. Shown with Highlands school counselor, Thomas Jessup and Rotary club president, Bill Futral, are and Middle School winner, Analyse Crook, Elementary School winner, Jacob Holt and High School winner, Reta Thatcher.

Laurel Garden Club provides grant to the Biological Station

At its Feb. 6 meeting, the Laurel Garden Club approved a grant request from the Highlands Biological Station to purchase a Greenhouse Package (8'X12') to be used in the propagation of native plants, specifically from local sources. The overall intent of the grant project is to develop a native plant rescue and propagation program.

Max Lanning, Botanical Garden Supervisor, of the Highlands Biological Station, says "it has become increasingly apparent that many of our most endemic and well-adapted native species in the Southern Highlands region can be difficult to obtain in the nursery trade. Further, many of these species are state or federally-listed as threatened, endangered, or sensitive; and therefore, difficult to acquire without special permits."

The Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust has generously allowed the collection of some plant material from select properties, including seeds, vegetative cuttings, and some whole plants in danger of trampling.

Collection and storage of seeds has already begun. The next step will be the construction of a Heart Cypress framed greenhouse, funded by Laurel Garden Club. Future plans include transplanting these propagated plants to rock outcrop communities, not only in the Botanical Gardens, but also for ecological restoration projects at other Land Trust properties.

These plants, nurtured in the greenhouse, will be used to repopulate rare and endangered native plants and communities at places like Satulah Mountain and Sunset Rock, which are heavily visited and in danger of trampling by hikers.

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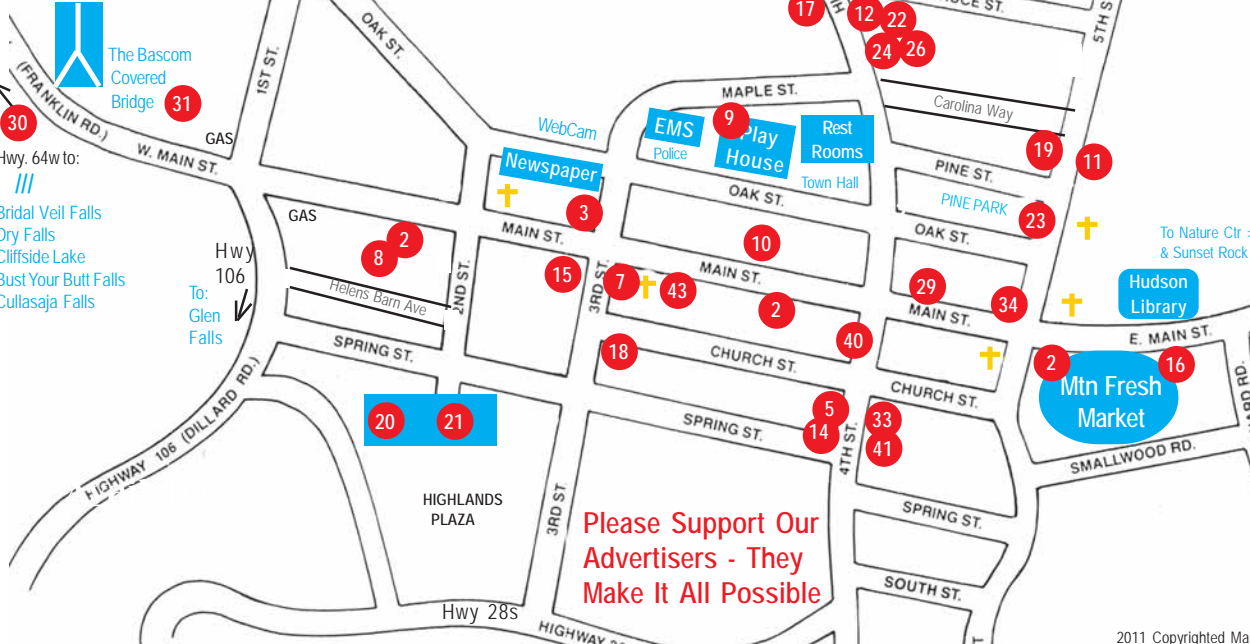
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Saturday, March 10
• Chili Cook Off at the Community Building 6:30-9:30 p.m. To enter the contest call 526-5841.
Sunday, March 11
• The Foxfire Boys Bluegrass Group will be participating in the morning worship service at First Presbyterian Church at 11 am.
Tuesday, March 13
• Come listen to the Irish Blarney Tales and Tales of Spring stories at the Story Swap on Tuesday at 7 pm, at the Ugly Dog Pub. If you have a special 3-7 minute blarney or spring story to tell or read, sign up at the pub or call 369-1927.

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