

Highlands Newspaper

FREE every Thursday

Volume 10, Number 48

Internet PDF Version at www.HighlandsNewspaperPDF.com

Thursday, Nov. 29, 2012

Friday, Nov. 30

• The Highlands-Cashiers Hospital Auxiliary reception for the Tree of Lights celebration from 6-7:30pm. There will be ornaments available for purchase in honor or memory of a loved one, and free hot chocolate and cookies. All proceeds go toward the H-C Hospital Auxiliary Scholarship Fund.

Sat. Dec. 1

• At The Bascom, Family Storytime: J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit, 2-2:30p.

• Annual Olde Mountain Christmas Parade on Main Street at 11 a.m.

• 'Tis the Season, Highlands' alternative gift market sponsored by the town's local churches, offers a unique, hassle-free way to make a gift to your favorite charity. Come to the Highlands Methodist Church after the Christmas parade on Saturday, until 2 p.m. Come "browse" through the displays of 14 local charitable organizations and learn how even a modest gift can go a long way to help those in need. Gifts can be made in honor of someone special, or even as a memorial.

• There will be a Christmas Carol Sing at First Presbyterian Church at 2pm on Saturday after the parade. If you enjoy singing familiar Christmas carols, you won't want to miss this! Steil Huie will be song leader with Angie Jenkins accompanying at the church's pipe organ.

Sun. & Mon., Dec. 2 & 3

• The Highlands Cashiers Players will hold auditions for the winter play on Sunday, December 2 at 4pm and Call Backs (if needed) on Monday, December 3 at 5:30pm at the Highlands PAC. For more information please call Mary Adair: 828.342.1999

Thurs., Dec 7

• Talze at the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation at 5:30 p.m.

Zoning Board OK's subdivision variance

At its November meeting, the Zoning Board of Adjustment OK'd a subdivision variance for 560 North Fifth Street.

The 1.11-acre plot, owned by the Bryson Family, is zoned R2, and currently houses three homes

— two that front Fifth Street and one that fronts Laurel Street — all on one lot with one tax bill.

The variance was to subdivide the plot into three separate parcels, each containing one dwelling. To subdivide the prop-

erty into three parcels, the minimum lot size of 0.5 acres is required, per the current ordinance, however, the Brysons asked for permission to subdivide the property into three, 0.37-acre parcels,

• See ZONING BOARD page 19

Highlands School impacted by state budget cuts

By Ryan Potts

At the Macon County Board of Education meeting held on Monday, Nov. 19 in Nantahala, the BOE voted not to fill the vacant teacher's assistant (TA) position at Highlands School resulting from the retirement of longtime Highlands TA Brenda Keener.

The vote was 4-1 -- Highlands representative Stephanie McCall voted against it.

"I understand we have to make cuts but at the same time, the last thing we should be cutting is personnel in the classroom," she said.

At Franklin High School an English teacher is being taken out of the classroom to take on a new support position dealing with female student behavior problems and helping to implementing the

• See CUTS page 19

Camels and more on parade



Highlands annual Christmas parade is Saturday, Dec. 1 at 11 a.m. on Main Street.

Photo by Jim Lewicki

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Final meeting for Kuppers

QZAB funds OK'd for Highlands

County commissioners and staff bid Commissioner Bobby Kuppers good-bye Tuesday night, in a heartfelt emotional segment of the Nov. 20 continuation meeting.

Chairman Kevin Corbin opened comments with a passage from Ecclesiastes 3:17 "For Everything There is a Season" saying that organizations and individuals deal with change everyday — "and it's inevitability we are dealing with tonight."

He said the board wanted to recognize Kuppers' efforts to the board and service to the community.

Commissioner Jim Tate was the first to speak. "Thank you for teaching me and the rest of us to 'always have the conversation,'" he said. Kuppers is known for urging citizens and commissioners to do just that.

Attorney Chester Jones said it's so important for the business of the county to be done that way and for commissioners on the board to not be fearful of having the conversation.

"Commissioner Kuppers reminded and challenged this

• See KUPPERS page 5

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• LETTERS •

In response to Mr. Swanson's Nov. 15 column

Dear Editor,

If only Mr. Swanson had stopped with his first sentence.... "I have no words to describe my feelings..." That would have been, perhaps still could be, a blessing to us all.

But rather than keep silence Mr. Swanson proceeded to dredge up supposedly "objective" comments from far afield. Using such quotes keeps Mr. Swanson from personally articulating, and therefore taking responsibility for a theology shaped by loss and anger. He can attribute it to others and then simply endorse it.

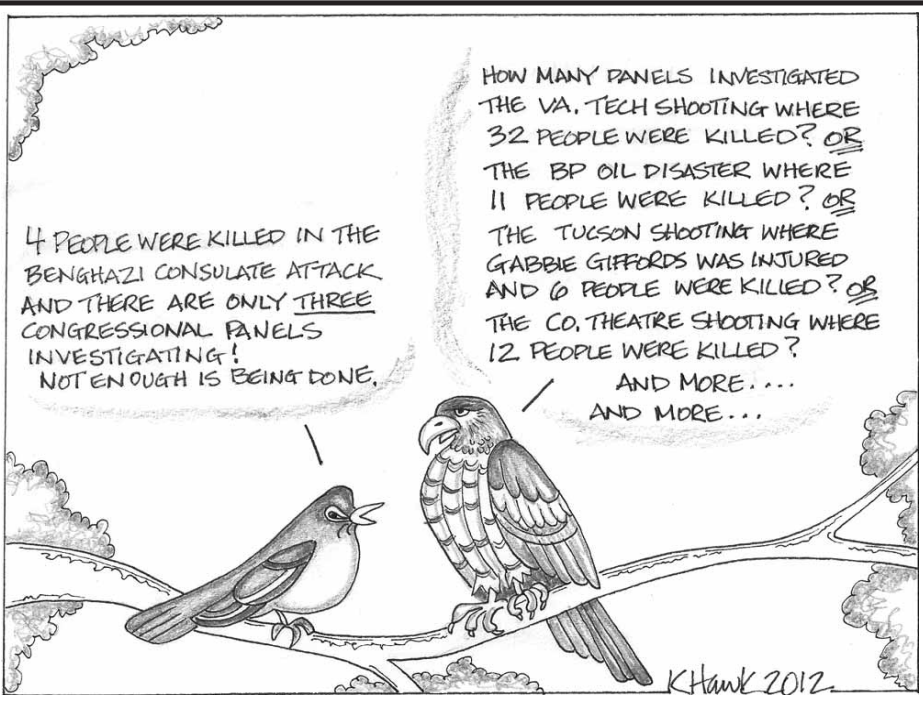
The use of God to buttress any political position should bring an immediate caution. The invocation of God's name raises the debate to an ultimate level – it aligns the speaker with divine intention – or at least that speaker's interpretation of divine intention. To say, as one of those quoted by Mr. Swanson, that "America is being humbled by God..." admits of no humility on the part of the speaker. Rather there is an immense presumption of insight into the divine.

There is evidently a large number – or at least a large enough number – of people who reject Mr. Swanson's interpretation, and align themselves with a God who is seen through the lens of what is deemed the greatest commandment: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.

I invite Mr. Swanson, after an appropriate period of silence for reflection, to abandon the false dichotomy of "revenge" and "Love of country" and look into what it means to "love your neighbor as yourself."

That commandment does not seem to be about a sentimental feeling, or an unqualified acceptance of all perspectives on any situation or issue. It is about seeing need where it exists, taking action to meet that need, and extending care, both in the moment and for the long term. At least,

• HAWK'S EYE VIEW •



that's the illustration that Jesus gave when "love your neighbor as yourself" was countered with "who is my neighbor?"

The illustration also makes clear that "my neighbor" will most likely be someone who is NOT like me, in terms of ethnic or religious background, economic standing, education, employment – maybe even political affiliation. It is easy to love people who are like us, people with whom we can identify. It is more of a challenge to love people with different viewpoints, different hopes and dreams, different life experiences. But we can try.

Martha Porter
Highlands

• OBITUARIES •

James "Gene" Eugene Cutshaw



James "Gene" Eugene Cutshaw, 68, died Monday, November 19, 2012 in Highlands, NC.

A longtime resident of Franklin NC, he was born in Toledo, OH, on March 11, 1945. He was the son of Calvin Eugene Cutshaw and Willie Mae Tucker Cutshaw. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his daughter, Michelle Marie Cutshaw and his sister, Constance Halterman.

Gene was a veteran of the US Coast Guard who served his country honorably for 15 years. He was an entrepreneur whose ventures ranged from founding Atlantic Equity Mortgage Corporation in Palm Beach, FL to owning and operating Cutshaw Trucking in Franklin, NC. He was an amateur pilot who loved animals

• See OBITUARIES page 3

Highlands Newspaper

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Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny
High: 45 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 50 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 53 °F	Low: 42 °F	High: 54 °F

... OBITUARIES from page 2

and working with cutting horses. He attended Cullasaja Assembly of God.

Survived by his children Kimberly Triebe of Sylva, Christopher Cutshaw and wife Gerri of Highlands, NC, April Metz and husband Carey of Houston, Tx.

Mourned by his wife of 13 years Debra Beamer Cutshaw and her children Kimberly Elliot of Franklin and Eddie Elliot of Otto.

Gene is also survived by his nine grandchildren, one great-granddaughter, brother Wade Cutshaw of Toledo, OH, and sisters Sandy McCoy of Toledo, OH and Carlene Looney of Toledo, OH.

A Memorial Service will be held at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, December 1st in the Chapel of Macon Funeral Home. Rev. Michael Lee will officiate. Military rites will be conducted by the VFW Post 7339 and American Legion Post 108.

The family will receive friends from 4-5:30 p.m. prior to the service at the funeral home.

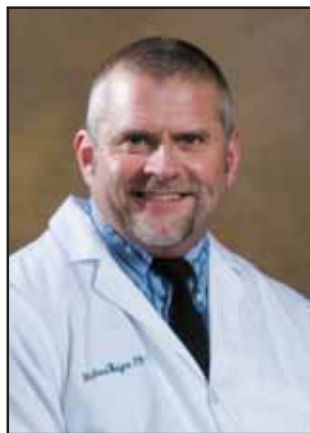
In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to Paws With A Cause, 4646 South Division, Wayland MI 49348. Toll Free: 800-253-7297 or an online donation at www.pawswithacause.org/Donate

Please put Kimberly Triebe in the Tag Line.

Macon Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

Online condolences can be made at maconfuneralhome.com

Dr. David Wheeler



At approximately midnight Monday, Nov. 26, 2012, Dr. David M. Wheeler died from injuries sustained in an automobile accident.

Dr. Wheeler had been a physician on the medical staff of Highlands-Cashiers Hospital since 1988 when he began practicing family medicine in Cashiers at Mountain Area Family Medicine. He continued there until this past February when he transitioned to the H-C Hospital to fill the position of Emergency Department Medical Director.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, Dec. 1 at 7 p.m. at the Highlands United Methodist Church on Main Street in Highlands. Pastor Paul Christy will officiate.

Family will receive friends from 4-6:30p. In addition, Hospital Chaplain, Rev. Ralph Campbell will preside over a memorial service outside the H-C Hospital Emergency Room by the Flag pole 10 am Friday, November 30th.

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested memorials be sent to UNC Dance Marathon to benefit the NC Children's Hospital. www.uncmarathon.org. UNC Dance Marathon, PO Box 628, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.



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Town Board Meeting

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Thursday, Dec. 6 at 7 p.m.

AGENDA

Public Hearing:

Conditional Use Zoning 594 Main Street

A. Open Public Hearing

B. Staff Comments/Recommendation

C. Public Comments

D. Close Public Hearing

E. Council Action

Regularly Scheduled Public Comment Period

Reports:

A. Mayor

B. Commissioners and Committee Reports

C. Town Manager

Planning Matters:

Request to Appeal Planning Board Decision

Stephen Ham

Financial Matters

Miscellaneous Matters

A. Council Committee Appointments

B. Board Meeting Schedule for 2013

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Calvin Floyd Webb

Calvin Floyd Webb, age 71, of Walhalla, SC died Monday, November 26, 2012. Born in Oconee County, SC, he was the son of the late James Floyd and Annie Lee Owens Webb. He was a machine operator in the textile industry and was a member of Double Springs Baptist Church.

Mr. Webb is survived by two sisters, Sheila Webb of Ducktown, TN and Betty Jean Ridley of Walhalla, SC and two brothers, John Webb of Clayton, GA and George Webb of Lenoir City, TN. In addition to his parents he was preceded in death by two brothers, Bill and Ed Webb.

Funeral services will be held Thursday, November 29, 2012 at 2 pm at Macedonia Baptist Church with Rev. Roy Lowe officiating. Burial will be in the church cemetery. The family will receive friends Wednesday evening from 6-8 pm at Bryant-Grant Funeral Home in Highlands, where the body will remain until being placed in the church 30 minutes prior to the service.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

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• LAUGHING AT LIFE •

In my next life, I wanna put the wet stuff on the hot stuff

Close your eyes and picture this. A guy is lowered into a black hole in the ground that leads to a septic tank buried several feet underground to locate a very stupid 60-lb. dog that had fallen in. Now open your eyes so you can finish reading this. Subsequently, the dog was harnessed and hoisted out of the tank bringing cheers from the dog's owners and neighbors. I think they nicknamed the pointer-mix Stinky. I would have named him Stupid. All this happened on election night in Palm Beach County, FL, the land of stupid dogs and screwed up election officials.

The guy in the tank saving the dog's life was a Palm Beach firefighter from the Hazardous Material Response

Team, proving that poop is, in fact, a hazardous material. Write that down. Now I'm really freaking 'cause I'm currently saving about 500 pounds of the stuff in my backyard. I know all about this because my oldest son is a Haz-Mat captain for Palm Beach County and was in charge of this dog and pony show. Oops, I mean dog and poop show. (Yes, it's on U-Tube.)

To further prove that Palm Beach firefighters do wild and crazy stuff, you might remember Hazcock, the station house rooster firefighters found wandering around in a nearby field. The rooster became their mascot and was named Hazcock by Haz Mat firefighters. Even Hazcock was smart enough not to walk into a black hole in the ground. Sadly, Hazcock became so mean they ate him for dinner. Ha, only kidding but they did have to ship



with Fred Wooldridge
Feedback is encouraged!
askfredanything@aol.com

him out 'cause he kept attacking firefighters, demanding he be allowed to ride shotgun. Once the Fire Chief bled, Hazcock was toast.

The purpose of this week's column is to prove, once and for all, that firefighters do everything good and wonderful while cops do everything mean and bad. I've discussed this with my son and he totally agrees.

Here's just a small example of what I mean. Brave macho firefighters save stupid dogs from septic tanks and even more stupid

horses from mud holes. They get national notoriety, are given awards, free food, etc. Firefighters also save your home from fire and rescue people from burning buildings. They go to car crashes and use their jaws-of-life to pry open burning cars and remove people who are about to die. They save heart attack victims near death, stabilize them, and get them to hospitals still alive. They give out Halloween candy and get to meet hot babe mothers who ask if they can be shown around the firehouse and want to know where they sleep. They share sleeping quarters with gorgeous knock your socks off single firefighter women. Firefighter males pose half naked for pictures so they can show off their muscles for calendars. Firefighter women pose half naked to show off their bodacious TA TA's for calendars. And I could go on and on but, as a retired cop, I'm making myself sick.

To further prove my point, here's a short list of what cops do regularly. For starters, cops would never be lowered into a hole 'cause most are too fat to fit in. Wait...that's unfair. They might squeeze in but they would never get them out. Cops knock on doors in the middle of the night to inform loved ones a family member was killed in an auto accident. They knock on doors in the middle of the

•See WOOLDRIDGE page 21

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• THE VIEW FROM HERE •

Times call for shared sacrifices

A few Republican congressmen, including South Carolina senator, Lindsay Graham, are backing away from their pledge against voting for higher taxes. Good for them. Let's hope their example is contagious.

In the recent election, 238 of 242 Republican House members and 41 of 47 Senators promised they would not support an increase in marginal tax rates.

With the fiscal cliff looming, it's about time we relearned the art of compromise. None of us, except Warren Buffet, wants to pay higher taxes, but a growing number of Americans recognizes the need for compromise and the need for sacrifice. America needs to tighten its belt. Spending has gone wild. Our government runs on borrowed money. An aging population has dramatically increased the demand on government services, notably Social Security and Medicare. The trend will not be reversed in the foreseeable future.

Fewer workers supporting more retirees sets the stage for generational conflict. It's time for AARP and the millions it represents to get on board. It's time for liberal Democrats to get on board, and it's time for Republicans to pitch in, too.

Our country has a rich heritage of sacrifice. In times of war, we've asked the ultimate sacrifice from hundreds of thousands of our young people. Today, we pay homage to the military, but there is no sacrifice in sticking a magnetic yellow ribbon on the trunk of a car, or pinning an American flag in your lapel. It's easy and trendy to thank a soldier for his service. Some travelers buy a service person a beer or Coke at the airport. We spend billions for the most advanced weap-



Dr. Henry Salzarulo

Feedback is encouraged.

email:

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only to lessen their risk, but none of this constitutes sacrifice for the American population. The vast majority of us are untouched by war. We no longer ask sacrifice from our young people. We pay for a volunteer Army. Sacrifice is out of vogue.

Among the more memorable words spoken by an American president were those of John F. Kennedy, who said, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."

The tradition of service and sacrifice is dormant, if not dead in this country. The elderly refuse to participate. The poor enjoy the fruits of others labor. The wealthy are unwilling to pay higher taxes, and corporations refuse to give up costly privileges. And we are led by elected officials who have shown interest in the welfare of the country, whose only ambition is reelection, and whose major activity is raising money for the next campaign.

Until, and unless, Americans demand more of their leaders we will have more of the same. No group is willing to sacrifice. We vote for those candidates who promise us a bigger bite of a shrinking pie, rather than those who pledge to work together to address the monumental financial crisis we face.

If we continue to follow the example of western European social democracies, we face a fate similar to those of Greece and Spain.

It is so obvious that we need both reduced spending and increased revenue to correct our financial ills. The solution calls for shared sacrifice.

When will our leaders, and voters who send them to Washington come to grips with this reality?

... KUPPERS from page 1

board on that point on a regular basis," he said.

County Manager Jack Horton said he's been in the business of county government for a long time and worked with a lot of elected officials in a lot of jurisdictions and the public should know that most of the time people on boards are there to do the best for their constituents.

"The reason this board has worked well together is because it has done the right things for the right reasons. Mr. Kupperts is the epitome of that and he has done a terrific job as county commissioner. He's always willing to listen to different points of view and sometimes you can even change his mind if you have enough facts and figures to go along with it," said Horton.

Human Resources Director/Deputy Clerk to the Board Mike Decker said he appreciated the passion and commitment Kupperts brought to the job.

Chairman Corbin said he appreciated Kupperts.

"We've sat on opposite sides of the political aisle. At times we've agreed about things; at times we've disagreed. The thing I appreciate about Mr. Kupperts is his willingness to work together and his love for Macon County.

• See KUPPERS page 16



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• JUST HERS •

A cat named Weasel, Part I

“It’s cancer,” said the vet. Funny how that hits you right in the gut, no matter how many times you hear it. And I’d heard it too often, first with my French grandfather, then Daddy, Orion, John, and now Weasel. Sweet Weasel, who’d been such a comfort when John died, whose huge green eyes seemed to reach into my soul. In fact, both cats, Orion and Weasel, had kept me going on days when I would have stayed in bed with the

covers over my head, if I hadn’t had to feed and groom the cats, and handle litter box duty.

Thanksgiving 2005 was the first time in years I hadn’t spent Thanksgiving in Colorado with my brother and his family. I chose instead to venture down to Highlands to spend the holiday with John and the fur people. In those days, John had three cats – a little black and white tuxedo female, Smidgen, a large Dreamsicle (orange and white) male, Orion, and a beautiful female, Weasel. Weasel was either a calico, a tortoiseshell, a torbie (tortoiseshell tabby), or a brindle. Her beautiful coat contained many colors, and as befitted the lady she was, her wardrobe included a pristine white bib, and four matching white paws with pink and black pads. Weasel had a splash of brown across her forehead, and the most marvelous huge green eyes.

Like my father, John had grown up in an almost exclusively dog household. Cats were for sissies, or so they thought. That made the devotion of these big, tall guys to their cats even more precious. By the time I came down to Highlands that first Thanksgiving, John was resolutely a cat person. If Weasel seems an odd name for a cat, her original name was even stranger. Her previous owners had

named her “Dweezil” after iconic rock legend Frank Zappa’s son of the same name. I guess she was lucky they hadn’t named her Moon Unit, after his daughter! I don’t think Weasie had an easy time of it before she came to live with John.

She was often wide eyed and anxious, as if she wasn’t convinced the world was a safe place. Then and there, I determined that for all of the cats, I would make sure it would be.

It didn’t take me long to realize that Weasel was the smartest of the three cats. She delighted in sitting in front of her food bowl, flicking dried morsels into the water bowl with her paw, and then fishing them out when they reached the desired moistness. Maman loved all the cats, but only Weasie jumped on top of the bed once my mother had settled in for the night. My mother found Weasel absolutely enchanting, often calling me to witness some feat of feline genius which would keep them both entertained for



Michelle Mead-Armor
michiemead@aol.com

hours. Weasel discovered that my mother had several plastic medicine containers which she kept on her bedside table. My clever girl would jump up on the table, batting the containers until they fell on the floor, then looking with huge inno-

cent eyes as if to say, “Why, Grand-mère! What are they doing down there?”

Kettlerock had no finished basement, but a crawl space with a dirt floor. This meant that mice were a constant problem, especially in cold or rainy weather, when they would come upstairs for warmth. Fortunately, all three cats were excellent mousers, but perhaps none as competent as Weasel. One chilly evening, I awoke up to find Weasel on top of the duvet, hopping around in an agitated manner. I reached down to find her playing with what I thought was a mouse toy. I grabbed it by the tail and flung onto the floor. “Bad Weasel!” I chided. “Why don’t you play with

• See JUST HERS page 18



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• COACH'S CORNER •

It's not how you start, it's how you finish...except in college football

Every once in a while, I manage to work myself into a tizzy and go on a really good rant, and while the seeds of this were planted in my column against the BCS last week, the results of this past weekend in college football were enough to send me over the edge.



Ryan Potts
tryanpotts@hotmail.com

In all honesty, there is absolutely no legitimate argument for the Alabama Crimson Tide to be the second ranked team in the nation. None. Zero. Zilch. And yet, they are, and the reason that they are is because they started the season ranked #2 in the nation, and despite not doing anything to earn that ranking, that is where they stand. Out of the twelve games that they have played, Alabama has only beaten 4 teams with a winning record. One of those four teams is Western Kentucky, who is 4-4 in the Sun Belt Conference. Alabama's lone quality win on the season is a win at LSU in which they were outgained by 100+ yards. The Tide is 1-1 against the BCS top 15, and played one of the weakest conference schedules in recent memory, avoiding the top 3 teams in the SEC East entirely. Despite all of these hard numbers, Alabama continues to be ranked #2 in the nation by the AP and Coaches Poll voters who obviously base their votes on the Tide performance in recent years and not the reality of this season.

To continue with this ridiculousness, Alabama Coach Nick Saban had the absolute nerve to say at an SEC media conference on Monday that it was a shame that the loser of the SEC Championship would be relegated to a non-BCS bowl. Due to Florida being ranked 4th in the BCS, they will move up to 3rd after the SEC Championship and therefore be locked in to the Sugar Bowl. Saban's argument is that since Florida did not win the SEC East, then they should not be a BCS bowl team. Naturally, Saban's argument just ONE YEAR AGO was that strength of schedule should be the determining factor in a birth in the

BCS Championship and not whether or not a team has won the conference championship. No one who has listened to Saban at all over the years is surprised by this bit of blatant hypocrisy, but yet it is still entertaining in the same sort of way that it is when Jon Stewart plays clips of Fox News pundits contradicting themselves.

Now don't get me wrong—I'm not saying Alabama is a patsy, and they may well beat UGA on Saturday and play for a BCS Championship (although my money is on Georgia). This rant is more about the final a year of a system that has caused us to endlessly complain about the lack of a playoff. It's also about the unfairness of a system that cares way more about the perception bestowed upon a team at the beginning of the season, rather than what that team has done on the field.

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EACH DINNER FEEDS A FAMILY OF FOUR

MON	CHOOSE EITHER: MEXICAN MONDAY: FOUR CHEESE AND FOUR CHICKEN ENCHILADAS, REFRIED BEANS, MONTEREY RICE, HOMEMADE TORTILLA CHIPS, SALSA, SHREDDED LETTUCE, TOMATOES, SOUR CREAM OR 24 BUFFALO WINGS OR 2 LBS CHICKEN TENDERS AND HAND CUT FRIES	\$17.95
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WED	CHICKEN OR STEAK POT PIE AND A LARGE SALAD	\$17.95
THURS	ROASTED MEATLOAF WITH MASHED POTATOES, GRAVY AND A LARGE SALAD	\$17.95
FRI	WILD CAUGHT FRIED SHRIMP, BAKED POTATOES, HUSH PUPPIES, AND COLESLAW	\$20.95
SAT	IN-HOUSE SMOKED BBQ, COLESLAW, APPLE AND BACON BAKED BEANS, AND YEAST ROLLS	\$17.95

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Gentle land makes for easy building and fewer erosion problems. Plenty of parking, child friendly; a great place to walk.

Come Visit!

From Main St., take Hwy. 106 (The Dillard Road) 1.8 miles just past the Glen Falls sign, turn right on Mt. Laurel Dr., go 3 tenths of a mile turn left on Moonlight. The entrance is on the right.

www.highlandsnchomesites.com

Contact (onsite owner) or your broker for plats, prices & a guided tour.

828-508-9952.

• THE CONSERVATIVE POV •

Happy Thanksgiving?

As usual, with a complete lack of ideas on what to write about, I went to Drudge for inspiration. I was met by the following headlines. 'Gang fight' at Black Friday sale...Man punched in Face Pulls Gun On Line-Cutting shopper...shots fired outside WALMART...Shoppers smash through door at URBAN OUTFITTERS...Customers run over in parking lot...Woman busted after throwing merchandise...Thousands storm VICTORIA'S SECRET...Insane battle over phones...Mayhem at Nebraska mall where 9 murdered in 2007...Shoplifter tries to mace security guards...Men steal boy's shopping bag outside BED, BATH & BEYOND...Heckler calls them zombies.

Well, inspired I'm not. I'm sure there is some redeeming social value in Black Friday sales, but when they spill backwards into Thanksgiving afternoon and evening, it seems we may have lost the meaning of Thanksgiving. I'm not concerned about retail sales people having to work on what used

to pass for a holiday. They knew the rules of the game when they hired on. I'm concerned that we, as a society, can't devote one day out of hundreds to be thankful. To cleanse our minds of material procurement for a few hours and share time with friends and family being thankful for what we have would seem to have a beneficial effect. Oh well, it's wishful thinking.

On another front, the labor unions seem to feel it's time to finish wrecking the economy and disrupt human activity, particularly regarding air travel. At a time when job creation has been the mantra of politicians, the unions are busy at job destruction. The Hostess Bakery debacle is a perfect example of their handiwork. Hostess, as you know, made and sold Twinkies, Ho-Ho's and other goodies for years.



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

From the hostessbrands.com website: "Hostess Brands is Closed. We are sorry to announce that Hostess Brands, Inc. has been forced by a Bakers Union strike to shut down all operations and sell all company assets. Hostess Brands, Inc announced that the US Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York approved its emergency motion for the orderly wind down of its business and sale of its assets.

Hostess Brands is winding down the Company after a nationwide strike initiated by the Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco and Grain Millers Union that commenced on November 9th crippled its operations at a time when the company lacked the financial re-

• See SWANSON page 22

JOIN US FOR EGGS, HASH BROWNS, SLOW COOKED GRITS, FRESH BAKED BISCUITS, COUNTRY HAM AND MADE IN HOUSE SAUSAGE.

 **BREAKFAST TO ORDER!**

WAFFLES AND FRENCH TOAST SERVED WITH REAL MAPLE SYRUP. STEEL-CUT OATMEAL. FRESH BAKED MUFFINS, AND OUR ORGANIC ROASTED IN HOUSE COFFEE AND ESPRESSO.

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MONDAY - SATURDAY 7 TO 10:30AM, SUNDAY 8 - 10:30AM
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'Tis the Season

**By Pat Allen
Pat Allen Realty Group**

As the memories of Thanksgiving 2012 settle in we are now gearing up for the Christmas season and all the joy and magic it holds. I am thankful for family, friends, faith, good health and a lovely new associate, Andrea Gabbard who has been a true blessing to me this year.

I have also been blessed with my best year EVER in real estate and just learned that I am the top agent in the Highlands MLS! We are all blessed in so many ways if we just take the time to stop and reflect.

Christmas shopping kicks off with our little hometown Christmas parade this Saturday.

For husbands who are looking for that perfect Christmas gift I have a dozen ideas!

The Twelve Days of Christmas Real Estate Style:

- On the first day of Christmas you can give the historic Adams home in Mirror Lake...\$375,000 with charm included.

- On the second day of Christmas you can give the Taggart Condo in Highlands Cove...\$595,000 with mountain view included.

- On the third day of Christmas you can give the Mawyer's fantastic lot at the Old Edwards Club...\$599,000 with dramatic view included.

- On the fourth day of Christmas you can give Dr. Blue's charming property in town...\$595,000 with business area, living quarters and garage apartment included.

- On the fifth day of Christmas

you can give the Gabbard home...\$525,000 Which is located in a privated gated lake front community -- hiking trails included.

- On the sixth day of Christmas you can give the Adams house and walk to town...\$685,000 with waterfall and Koi pond included.

- On the seventh day of Christmas you can give the lovely Beilan condo in Highlands Country Club...\$749,000 with golf course view included.

- On the eighth day of Christmas you can give the Hill bed and breakfast...\$999,000 and close to town. Lovely grounds included.

- On the ninth day of Christmas you can give the Steinfield home in Highlands Cove...\$1,250,000 extra lots available.

- On the tenth day of Christmas you can give the Astor home in Highlands Falls...\$1,400,000 fabulous waterfall and mountain view included.

- On the eleventh day of Christmas you can give the Faulk/Jackson home on Bowery Rd...\$1,350,000 unique and featured in several magazines. Fabulous kitchen and 4 fireplaces included.

- On the twelfth day of Christmas you can give the Cranford's bear shadow home...\$2,195,000 a view like no other included.

We have more to choose from and we will gift wrap for free! Merry Christmas and God bless you everyone.

• **To contact Pat or Andrea of Pat Allen Realty Group, call 526-8784.**

• REAL ESTATE SNAP-SHOTS •

Properties for Sale

A Hidden 1.36 Acre Gem!



Majestic old growth adorns this beauty with several possible building sites. With gently rolling topography, and the gentility of Webbmont, this acreage is a hidden gem. Several pathways exist on the property making it easy to see. Survey markers in place. A true steal at only \$98,000! MLS #75292.

2BD/2BA Charmer in Mirror Lake



A 2BR/2BA, Mirror Lake area cottage loaded with charm, character, custom details and unique features. Wonderful decking, hardwood flooring, custom doors and delightful custom carpentry. Completely rebuilt from the ground up in 2006 with a new roof in 2003. Turn-key! Offered at \$274,000. MLS #73401.



Susie deVille,
Broker-in-Charge
susie@WhiteOakRG.com

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Commercial Cottage



Adorable 1940s cottage with commanding classic granite fireplace, original pine paneling and oak floors. Would give any business instant cache. Best location in Cottage Row, fronting Hwy 64 East (Cashiers Rd). Great road visibility. Plans for possible expansion on file. Located less than 2 miles from town! Offered at \$145,000. MLS #75997.

Mountain View Home Adjoining USFS



This 3BR, 3BA home is on 2.28 acres and boasts beautiful mountain views with wood floors, cathedral ceiling, brick fireplace with gas logs, and screened porch. Master suite has private sunroom/sitting area, walk-in shower with double shower heads and tile seat. Many upgrades. Rock garden with water feature, 2 car garage, partially finished basement with storage and generator. Offered at \$475,000. MLS #75732.

Please contact Susie deVille at (828) 371-2079 or Mal Phillips at (828) 200-2642.



Mal Phillips,
Broker
mal@WhiteOakRG.com



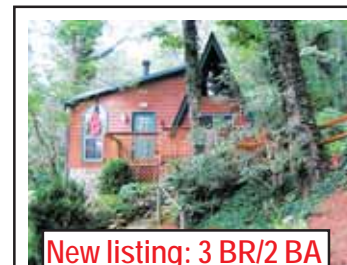
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Live where you work! Totally redone with great quality, this home/office/retail property has excellent road frontage, lovely living area with hardwood floors, stone fireplace and lovely porches. A garage apartment plus many rooms for offices etc. A deal at \$595,000. MLS 75441.
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BED & BREAKFAST
Lovely grounds with two waterfalls, small pools and terraces make this a perfect respite. 5 bedrooms and 5.5 baths, fireplaces in the morning room, great room, master suite and lower den. Offered at \$999,000. MLS #72434
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Rustic home in private gated lake community. 3 bed/2 baths, office, loft, access to hiking trails and pristine 17-acre mountain lake.
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Call Andrea Gabbard at
The Pat Allen Realty Group 828.526.8784 or
andreagabbard@gmail.com



New listing: 3 BR/2 BA
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Highlands NC Realty
Cell: 770-337-1000



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Area Upcoming Events

Join us for a
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Friday,
November 30th
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm
*Hot Chocolate and Cookies



Light up the holidays at
the Hospital by purchasing an
ornament to decorate the "Tree of Lights",
an annual fundraising event in which ornaments
are purchased in honor or memory of a loved one. All
proceeds support the Auxiliary Scholarship Fund.

Presented by the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital
Ladies Auxiliary

For more information please contact (828) 526-1376.



Ongoing

• Eastern Star will also be selling pecan pieces and pecan halves from the 2012 crop. The pecans are in 16 oz bags and will be on sale for \$9/bag. Please call Naomi Chastain, Worthy Matron, at 526-3487 and leave a message with your name and phone number. Call backs will be made once the pecans have been received in mid-November.

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 class. First class free.

Mondays

• Mountain View Group of Alcoholics Anonymous will be held in the Faith and Fellowship Center of First Presbyterian Church. Enter via the entrance on 5th St. and proceed a few steps down to the library.

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 Presbyterian Church at Fifth and

Main streets.

Wednesdays

• The Highlands Mountaintop Rotary meets at 7:30 a.m. in the dining room at the H-C 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.

• Mah Jong games will be held, open to the public, at the Albert Carlton Cashiers-Community Library at 1 p.m.

Wednesdays & Fridays

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

Thursdays, Fri., Sat., Sun.

• Live music at Altitudes at Skyline Lodge, 470 Skyline Lodge Road off Flat Mountain Road. Call 526-2121.

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. Call Anne Dog-

gett 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!

Second Thursdays

• The regular meeting of Highlands Chapter #284, Order of The Eastern Star is held at 7:30 p.m.

Saturdays, Nov. 24, Dec. 1, 8, 15

• Santa will be hearing wishes at the Highlands Visitor Center on Main Street near Third from 10a-4p and by appointment on Saturday, Dec. 22

Saturdays

• At Mountain Fresh Grocery, free wine tastings from 2-4 p.m.

• 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! 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



2012

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Distinctive, one-of-a-kind works of art for all
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Family Storytime: J. R. R. Tolkien's The Hobbit

Saturdays

December 1, 2-3:30 pm

December 8, 3-4:30 pm

December 15, 1:30-3 pm

Monday-Saturday, 10 am - 5 pm

www.TheBascom.org

Highlands, NC

Sunday, 12 noon - 5 pm

828.526.4949

Upcoming Events

attend.

Through Sun. Jan. 6

• At The Bascom, 'Tis the Season Giving Trees. Live and artificial trees will be decorated for the holidays by area nonprofits. Donation boxes will be at each tree.

Friday, Nov. 30

• The Highlands-Cashiers Hospital Auxiliary invites you to a reception for the Tree of Lights celebration on Friday from 6-7:30pm. There will be ornaments available for purchase in honor or memory of a loved one, and free hot chocolate and cookies. All proceeds go toward the H-C Hospital Auxiliary Scholarship Fund.

Sat. Dec. 1

• At The Bascom, Family Storytime: J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit, 2-2:30p.

• Annual Olde Mountain Christmas Parade on Main Street at 11 a.m.

• 'Tis the Season, Highlands' alternative gift market sponsored by the town's local churches, offers a unique, hassle-free way to make a gift to your favorite charity. Come to the Highlands Methodist Church after the Christmas parade on Saturday, until 2 p.m. Come "browse" through the displays of 14 local charitable organizations and learn how even a modest gift can go a long way to help those in need. Gifts can be made in honor of someone special, or even as a memorial.

• There will be a Christmas Carol Sing at First Presbyterian Church at 2pm on Saturday after the parade. If you enjoy singing familiar Christmas carols, you won't want to miss this! Stell Huie will be song leader with Angie Jenkins accompanying at the church's pipe organ.

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a 6-mile moderate hike with elevation change of 1000 ft. on the Appalachian Trail from Winding Stair Gap to Panther Gap, returning via Lick Log Gap. Meet in Franklin at Westgate opposite Burger King at 9 a.m. Drive 12 miles round trip. Call leaders Bill and Sharon Van Horn, 369-1983, for reservations. Visitors welcome but no pets please.

Sun. & Mon., Dec. 2 & 3

• The Highlands Cashiers Players will hold auditions for the winter play on Sunday, December 2 at 4pm and Call Backs (if needed) on Monday, December 3 at 5:30pm at the Highlands PAC. The play, "Social Security" has parts for 3 men and 3 women, middle age and older. Rehearsals will start the first week of January and performances dates are February 21, 22, 23 & 24 and March 1, 2, & 3. This joyful, laugh out loud comedy opened on Broadway in 1986. The story is about when sophisticated art dealers Barbara and her husband David find their domestic tranquility shattered when Barbara's sister deposits their eccentric archetypal Jewish mother on their doorstep. The comic sparks really begin to fly when the mother...old enough for Social Security, but never too old for romance, hits it off with an elderly artist who is the art dealers' best client. Directed by Mary Adair Leslie. Scripts may be found at the libraries in Highlands and Cashiers. For more information please call Mary Adair: 828.342.1999

Sun. Dec. 2

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a 1.5 mile easy hike with elevation change of 300 ft. to tower on

Albert Mountain, returning past a shelter on the Appalachian Trail. Meet in Franklin at Westgate opposite Burger King at 2 p.m. Drive 50 miles round trip. Call leader Kay Coriell, 369-6820, for reservations. Visitors welcome but no pets please.

Thurs., Dec 7

• Taize at the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation at 5:30 p.m.

Sat. & Sun., Dec. 8 & 9

• The Highlands Community Christian Chorale's Christmas Concert sponsored by Highlands United Methodist Church (HUMC) is Saturday and Sunday at 5 p.m. at the Highlands United Methodist Church at 315 Main Street. A reception follows the Sunday evening performance. Performances are free to the public.

Sat. Dec. 8

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a 3-mile moderate hike with elevation change of 600 ft. on Ranger Falls Trail from Cliffside Lake on an interesting interpretive trail of historic significance. Meet in Franklin at BiLo at 9:30 a.m. Drive 24 miles round trip. Call leader Gail Lehman, 524-5298, for reservations. Visitors welcome but no pets please.

• At The Bascom, Family Storytime: J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit, 3-4:30p.

Sun., Dec. 9

• A musical presentation by the children, youth and adult choirs of Community Bible Church at 7 p.m. All are invited!

Wed., Dec. 12-Jan 2

• A free support group on Wednesday evenings at 6PM December 12th through January 2nd. Sessions are an hour at the Peggy Crosby Center, 348 South 5th Street, Room 203 (just behind the receptionist desk.) The group will be facilitated by Bonnie Gramlich, a licensed professional counselor. Anyone who struggles with sadness or depression over the holidays is welcome to attend. There is no fee. Contact Bonnie at 828.342.0546 to more information or to sign up for this group.

Thurs., Dec. 13

• HCP's free Christmas reading, 7:30 p.m. at the Martin Lipscomb Performing Arts Center on Chestnut Street in Highlands. No reservations required. Hot cider and holiday sweets will be provided by the Highlands Chamber of Commerce and the HCP board.

Fri., Dec. 14

• Christmas Bird Count: Highlands Plateau Audubon invites you to participate in their 113th year of Christmas Bird Counting. Join them the morning of Friday. No experience needed. Binoculars available, Warm \$5.00 chili lunch follows count. Contact Brock Hutchins at 828-787-1387 or 404-295-0663 or brockhutchins@bellsouth.net for details and to sign up. This is a popular and fun event!

Sat. Dec. 15

• At The Bascom, Family Storytime: J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit, 1:30-3p.

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a 7-mile moderate-to-strenuous hike with elevation change of 1300 ft. on Bradley Fork and Smokemont Loop in the GSM-NP with a side trip to Chasteen Creek Cascade. Meet at Oconaluftee Visitor Center at 9 a.m. Drive 8 miles round trip. Call leader Keith Patton, 456-8895, for reservations.

• See EVENTS page 14

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SUN, DEC 9 @ 7 PM



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Upcoming Events

Hike limited to 15 hikers. Visitors welcome but no pets please.

- American Red Cross First Aid, CPR & AED Class 2-year certification at 8 a.m. \$75. Questions and registration at the Highlands Rec Park/Civic Center. 526-3556.

- The Franklin Cross Country team will be hosting the Grayson Hall Memorial 5K race on Saturday at 10 a.m. at Tasse Park on the Little Tennessee Greenway in Franklin, NC. This is the 8th year for the Grayson Hall Memorial race, which raises money for a Franklin High School scholarship. The idea for the race was conceived by Tiffany Allen, a FHS graduate and cross country runner, as a tribute to a former classmate who was killed in a car accident. Yearly scholarships in his memory have been awarded. A 1 mile fun run/walk will start at 10a, followed by the 5K run. Trophies will go to the top three male and females in both races, plus medals to the winners in each age group. The course is a fast one, primarily flat and paved, and follows the scenic Greenway alongside the Little Tennessee River. For more information and registration forms contact Denise Davis at 828-524-6467 or denise.davis@macon.k12.nc.us. The registration fee is \$20 and you can register online at active.com. Registration for students is \$15, but can't be done online. Register before December 7th and get a free t-shirt.

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a 9-mile strenuous hike with elevation change of 500 ft. following the Appalachian Trail from Deep Gap to Raven Rocks for great views of Lake Chatuge, Shooting Creek Valley and

Brasstown Bald. Meet in Franklin at Westgate Plaza at 9 a.m. Drive 40 miles round trip. Call leader Don O'Neal, 586-5723, for reservations. Visitors welcome, but no pets please.

Sun. Dec. 16

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a 2-mile easy hike up an old road to Mud Creek Falls, a lovely falls despite its name, with an interesting old bridge at the trail head. Meet at Smoky Mtn. Visitors Center in Otto, 2 pm. Drive 12 miles round trip. Call leader KayCoriell, 369-6820, for reservations. Visitors welcome but no pets please.

Sat. Dec. 22

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a 4.4-mile easy-to-moderate hike with an elevation change of 400 ft. from Sloan Bridge to Whitewater Falls on the Overlook Trail with great winter views from ridge above the falls. Meet at Cashiers Recreation Park at 10 a.m. Drive 14 miles round trip. Call leaders Mike and Susan Kettles, 743-1079, for reservation. Visitors welcome but no pets please.

Tues., Dec. 25

- Annual Christmas Day dinner at HCC's The Hudson House 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. Seating is by reservation only. The dinner is \$35 for adults; children under 12, \$15, and kids 5 and under are free. To reserve your place at the table, call 828-526-9419. Bring your family, and meet your friends for dinner on Christmas Day, and we'll do the dishes.



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• HS SPORTS •

Highlanders drop pair to Hayesville

By Ryan Potts

The Highlands Highlanders hosted the Hayesville Yellow Jackets in their first home game of the season last Tuesday. The Lady Highlanders looked to bounce back from a loss to Towns County, and the Highlanders looked to build upon their win in the opener against Towns County.

The Lady Highlanders were expecting pressure from the get-go against a Hayesville team that boasts its' strongest girls lineup in years. As in the Towns County game, the Lady Highlanders struggled against the pressure early, falling behind by double digits-but found a rhythm towards the end of the first quarter and cut the Hayesville lead to just 4 points. Unfortunately, that would be the last of the good news for the Lady Highlanders on the scoreboard, as they fell further behind in what would be a 63-30 defeat to the much more experienced Lady Jackets. Junior Emily Shuler led the Lady Highlanders with 10 points.

The Highlanders came into the game with Hayesville looking to upset a Yellow Jacket team that was undefeated in the regular season last year and returned 3 starters from that team. Highlands came out strong early, taking a 9-7 lead at the end of the first quarter and leading virtually the entire first half before a pair of turnovers in the final minute gave Hayesville a 25-23 halftime lead. Hayesville extended their lead out to as many as 14 in the second half before a final push from the home team cut the deficit to just 4 points with 90 seconds to play. The Highlanders would get no closer, however, and Hayesville prevailed with a 63-54 victory. Taylor Osteen led the Highlanders with 24 points.

Brent Amundrud layup at the team's first game at Towns County in Highlands, which Highlanders won.

Photo by Lisa Osteen



John 3:16

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

Proverbs 3:5

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Wed.: Men's Bible Study - 8:30 a.m., First Baptist Church
Thurs.: Women's Prayer Group - 10 a.m., Whiteside Presbyterian Church;
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Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m., Prayer Meeting – 6:15 p.m., Choir – 5 p.m.

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Wednesdays – Choir – 7

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

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Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg. – 7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Alfred Sizemore • 526-3212
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Wed: Adult Bible Study & Youth – 7 p.m.

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... KUPPERS continued from page 5

That is admirable and we all should pattern our love for Macon County after him," he said.

Ronnie Beale, the commissioner who served the longest with Kuppers, said he brought a level of integrity and intelligence to the board that set a new standard. "That's

just a fact," he said. "He offered a spirit of cooperation to this board when we needed it. He knew what was going on about any subject and if not supportive of it, he always had the discussion."

Kuppers had much to say and began by thanking the county staff from department heads on down.

"There are a lot of people to thank and a lot of water under the bridge in four years. The county employees need to be thanked more than anyone else. The people don't know how hard they work."

He may have set precedent when he thanked the press.

"These poor people are here every meeting and they take a beating. We schedule meetings, we recess meetings to all hours of the night and they sit right here with us and dang if they don't write the truth the next day. Sometimes you wish they wouldn't but they do. They have never treated me badly in four years and they've always told the truth. There have been times I've wished they had gotten a quote a little bit wrong, but when I say it I deserve to read about it. I thank you for your efforts. You keep us informed," he said.

He had kind words for his fellow commissioners, too.

"This is a great county and a great board. Don't ever stop having the conversation because when you do you become a victim of partisan politics and when that happens, you are worthless to the citizens of Macon County.

"If the only reason you are doing something back here behind this board is because your party wants you to do it, that's a shame and you ought to be fired.

"You need to do it because the people of Macon County need it done. We've always done that behind this board in the four years I've been here. I trust that will continue. I thank you; it has been a great run and an honor.

Highlands School renovations

After a brief reception for Kuppers, the board reconvened and discussed and unanimously approved moving forward with the QZAB funding for renovations at Highlands School.

Over the years the county has used Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZAB) to renovate area schools. These are typically low interest loans that come with stipulations.

This time the \$1.5 million borrowed under the QZAB umbrella is available at 0% interest.

Horton said the \$1.5 million won't

• See KUPPERS page 17



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... KUPPERS continued from page 16

take the school all the way it needs to go, but it will help.

QZAB funding requirements include a 10% match over a 10-year period from local, non-government sources – \$150,000 in this case.

Highlands Country Club has committed the \$150,000 in funds and in-kind services.

"This work is definitely needed and I want to give Highlands Country Club a plug for stepping up to the plate for the Highlands community. We are very grateful," said Commissioner Tate.

The items to be renovated with the \$1.5 million are replacement of the 1970 boiler and piping; spray insulation in all areas above the ceiling and around new pipes; new drop-tile ceilings in a 2'x2' grid; new T-8 high efficiency lighting; window air-conditioning units and radiator heating replaced with through-the-wall Bard units like the rest of the schools in the county; new floor tile in the elementary wing rooms, and new paint in all areas.

The Highlands gym debt, which was a little more than \$2 million, will be retired June 2013,

so the board agreed to assume the new debt then.

"Since we are retiring a debt, we won't have to accommodate this new debt with an additional tax rate or revenues," said Corbin.

QZAB funding must be approved by the Local Government Commission (LGC) at its meeting in February after the county has an architectural agreement and bids in hand. The board is moving ahead with the process but won't issue the debt until the gym debt is retired.

"I would be reluctant to do this if we couldn't do it with existing funds," said Corbin. "This is a

smaller amount of money – the gym was over \$2 million – and at 0% interest, so there is no increase in budget to accomplish this."

It's likely the QZAB loan will be over a 14-year period with a \$107,000 per year payment.

Refinancing county debt

Meanwhile, Finance Director Lori Hall has negotiated with BB&T to lower interest rates on all the county's loans which will save the county a lot of money.

"With interest rates as attractive as they are right now, we refinanced and saved the county \$250,000 on two of our smaller loans," she said.

She is now negotiating the 20-year, 4.59% interest loan the county got with BB&T in 2008 for new schools.

In the course of those conversations, Limited Obligation Bonds came to light, which could save the county between \$800,000 to \$2 million on the \$15.5 million it is paying back.

The interest rate could fall as low as 2.35% and commissioners agreed to hire First Tryon Advisors to guide them through and successfully close a bond deal.

The firm's fee will be about \$31,000 but is 100% contingent upon a successful closing.

There is a special called commission meeting Monday, Dec. 3 at 6 p.m. when newly elected commissioners will be sworn in. The next regular meeting is Tuesday, Dec. 11 at 6 p.

– Kim Lewicki

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–Tamra "Tammy" Talley
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... JUST HERS continued from page 6

your mouse on the floor?" I had almost fallen back to sleep when I remembered that none of the mouse toys still had their tails attached. This meant that what Weasel had decided to bring as room service was the real deal. I dug John in the ribs, and informed him of Weasel's special delivery. He mumbled, "Good girl, Weasel," rolled over, and went back to sleep.

While Weasel loved both of her parents, she was most resolutely Daddy's girl. She waited until John settled himself into his armchair, television news channel blaring, laptop computer on his tummy. She then settled onto the arm rest, snuzzling against

him. I often came into the living room to find them both soundly sleeping - and snoring. John's cancer had done little to change the routine. I fed and watered the cats, steeled myself to litter box duty, and assured a supply of cat toys. John provided his usual lap and cuddles. Eventually, I even took over mouse disposal duties, though never gladly.

On August 20th, John died in Asheville, and I spent eight hours with him before the funeral director took him away. I can only think that's why Weasel greeted me the way she did. Upon returning to the house later that evening, both cats rushed out in the hall to meet me. Weasel stopped dead in her tracks, sniffed my pants legs and let out the most heart rending wowl of grief. Both cats mourned John, but Weasel most of all. She slept on his pillow for hours on end, only leaving to eat and use the facilities.

And then, one day, we all had to leave. I loaded the cats into two carriers, and walked out to the car in the driving rain. The cats wailed. I sobbed. It was not a good day. Upon arriving at our new digs above the book shop, I opened the doors to the carriers. Orion bolted from his, and joined his sister in her carrier. The two

huddled together like storm-tossed refugees. I knew how they felt. Eventually the cats became town cats, learning to find that warm ray of sunshine in the bay window, or later on the enclosed porch. They learned about barking dogs walking past the window, and the sound of the garbage truck. While they dutifully played with the cat toys I provided, I wondered if they missed the mice, and the thrill of the chase. We moved three times in two years. Each time, the cats panicked at first, until they established new routines and found new hidey holes. Without realizing it, Orion and Weasel made each place a home. And then, last month, Weasel began to cough.



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... ZONING BOARD continued from page 1

each containing one dwelling.

The houses were put on the property before there was a zoning ordinance and as situated happen to comply with all current setback requirements.

Though not in compliance with current lot size stipulations, the property complies with the watershed built-upon requirements.

The property is located within the Watershed 3 – Balance of Watershed, the least restrictive of the Watershed Districts. Though it, too, requires a 0.5 acre minimum lot size, Julie Ventaloro, coordinator for the Water Supply Watershed Protection Program, NC Division of Water Quality, Wetlands & Stormwater Branch, said as long as each of the three lots meet the 24% built upon area (which they would), according to her, the variance would be considered a Minor Variance and would not require a variance from the NC Environmental Management Commission.

Mike Bryson said for any of the homes to be sold the properties have to be separated. He said the family also hopes to renovate and possibly rebuild the homes.

Code Enforcement Officer Josh Ward said as long as they stay under the 24% built-upon and stay within the setbacks, they wouldn't have to keep the old footprint, but if they didn't subdivide, they would have to renovate to the footprint.

Chairman Steve Chenoweth said that the Brysons are asking for what is currently there now – which is out of compliance due to the zoning ordinance.

"They didn't create the issue as it was permitted back then and it appears that the ordinance presently in place has created the difficulty for the owner," he said.

Member Charles Dasher said if they are going to ultimately built new residences, in his mind they would have to meet the current zoning requirements.

Vice Chairman John Underwood said that the only thing non-conforming about the situation is the lot sizes.

In the end, the board voted 4 to 1 to grant the variance with Charlie Dasher voting no.

Next the subdivision application goes to the Planning Board and the Town Board for preliminary and final plat approval.

– Kim Lewicki

... CUTS continued from page 1

state's new testing procedures that takes place next month. But it's possible a teacher could be hired in the future.

McCall voted against that move for the same reasons.

"I always think that if we have to lose personnel, it should be a support person not a person in the classroom," she said.

Budget woes caused by decreased funding from the state have forced many Local Education Agencies in Western North Carolina to look for ways to cut spending, and one of the methods used has been to not fill a position after a resignation or retirement.

Macon County, in particular, has been able to trim its budget in this manner while avoiding the teacher layoffs (also known as reduction-in-force) that have plagued some of the neighboring counties in recent years.

While the decision by the BOE not to fill this position at Highlands is certainly difficult to swallow, Highlands Principal Brian Jetter is taking the decision in stride.

"The system has been leaving unfilled a number of positions at different schools throughout the county due to the budget cuts required by the state," said Jetter. "And, while we never want to lose a position, this is the first position we have not been

able to fill since the state budget cutting began. We are covering Mrs. Keener's duties internally to assist the 1st grade teacher. Hopefully, we'll be able to fill this position in the future."

Macon County Director of Personnel Dan Moore also echoed the sentiment that, while it is always tough to lose a position at a school, the current financial situation of the county determines what decisions must be made in regards to personnel.

"The Macon County School district will experience a funding shortfall of approximately \$551,000 prior to the end of the 2012-13 school year," said Moore. "All employment vacancies incurred after the beginning of this school year are being examined in an effort to meet this funding shortfall."

Enrollment at Highlands School has dropped in recent years, with the Average Daily Membership (ADM) at Highlands down to 348, with just 105 in the high school portion of the school. Smaller enrollment numbers mean smaller class sizes, but they also open up the school to more position cuts in certain areas that the state determines through ADM numbers.

The next regular BOE meeting is Monday, Dec. 10 at 6 p.m. in the administration office in Franklin.



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• POLICE/FIRE DEPT. REPORTS •

Highlands PD log entries from Nov. 2. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor, or public officials have been used.

Nov. 2

• At 7 p.m., officers are called to Ghangri Restaurant on Carolina Way where a woman the windshield of her vehicle was smashed.

Nov. 7

• At 10 a.m., officers were called about criminal damage to land and defacing landmarks at Hardscrabble Ridge Road estimated at \$200.

Nov. 10

• At 11 a.m., officers were called to investigate a simple physical assault and someone communicating threats at Highlands Smokehouse on US 64 west.

Nov. 11

• At 2 p.m., officers were called about a hit and run accident where a driver struck a vehicle while backing out on Spring Street.

Nov. 14

• At 3:25 p.m., Mitchell Lamar Gerrells, 31, of Highlands, was arrested for possessing and concealing stolen property and larceny.

• At 1:43 p.m., officers were called to the Farmers Market to investigate

an incident concerning larceny, possession of stolen goods valued at \$232.

Nov. 15

• At 1:40 a.m., Armando Alfredo Cruz Ramirez, 38, of Highlands, was arrested on South Street for driving left of center.

• At 7:45 a.m., officers were called about the breaking and entering and stealing of coins from three The Highlander newspaper boxes on Mountain Fresh Grocery and Bryson's Food Store sidewalks. \$50 was stolen and damage to boxes is estimated at \$110.

Nov. 19

• At 10:55 a.m., officers were informed about a larceny that took place at in October while the victim was staying a Mitchell's Lodge. He reported a motorcycle garmin, sunglasses and reading glasses total valued at \$1,580 were stolen.

• During this timeframe, officers issued 14 citations (warnings, ordinance violations and citations)

Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries from Nov. 21

Nov. 21

• At 1 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a Life Line alert. Everything was OK.

Nov. 23

• At 1:22 a.m., the dept. responded to a Co² alarm. It was due to a faulty sensor.

Nov. 24

• At 6:51 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to Main Street where a person had fallen and hit their head.

• At 6:57 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to Cashiers-Glenville Fire Department. Highlands stood by at their station while they fought a structure fire.

• At 8:50 p.m., the dept. was called to Holt Road when a neighbor complained about someone burning leaves on a windy day. The fire was extinguished.

Nov. 26

• At 5:31 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to Dogwood Drive concerning a diabetic emergency.

... WOOLDRIDGE from page 4

night to serve a search warrant for drugs and then carry loved ones off to jail after finding a tiny amount of grass in their bedroom drawer but miss the mother lode hidden in a secret place.

Cops issue traffic tickets to people who don't deserve them for infractions they didn't commit. They pull people over and then humiliate them by making them take a breathalyzer test for drunk driving right in front of their mother-in-law who is sitting in the backseat and glaring. They cart drivers off to jail even though they say, "maybe a couple of beers after work is all."

Cops wrestle and sometimes knock down deadbeat husbands of bloody battered women to the horror of their little crying children watching their daddies eventually get handcuffed and carted off to jail. I could go on and on but I have to go and throw up. In my next life, I wanna put the wet stuff on the hot stuff.

Oh, I almost forgot. Guess who was picked to go into the septic tank for the stupid dog? No, it wasn't the stupidest firefighter present; it was the smallest firefighter present. Sometimes being big and tall is good....sometimes not. And I'm happy to report that stupid Shelley, aka stupid Stinky, is doing fine but stupid Palm Beach County election workers, as of today, are still scratching their heads and counting election ballots. Duh!

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... SWANSON from page 8

sources to survive a significant labor action.”

I have never understood the economics of union actions and I surely don't understand how 15,000 workers losing their jobs the day before Thanksgiving, with 3,500 more to lose theirs shortly is to anyone's benefit.

And then the ongoing attacks on Wal-Mart. From foxbusiness.com: “Wal-Mart protests have broken out at dozens of stores across the country, but lost in the commotion is the reality of the work life at Wal-Mart – and what the Bentonville, Arkansas mega retailer saw happen to with unions at Hostess Brands, now in bankruptcy liquidation.

It would be a coup for the union movement to get “Big Labor” in the door at the nation's biggest retailer, which employs about as many people as are on active duty in the US military. The union attacks have picked up in intensity as Wal-Mart has moved out of the non-union south to build stores in pro-union cities in the northeast.

Here's the reality. The facts are many workers come looking for jobs at Wal-Mart from heavily unionized grocery stores and supermarkets, where they get paid much less in the way of benefits, and where labor infractions and on-the-job injuries are significant. Wal-Mart says about a third of the company's hires come from other grocers and places like McDonald's in search of better wages and benefits.”

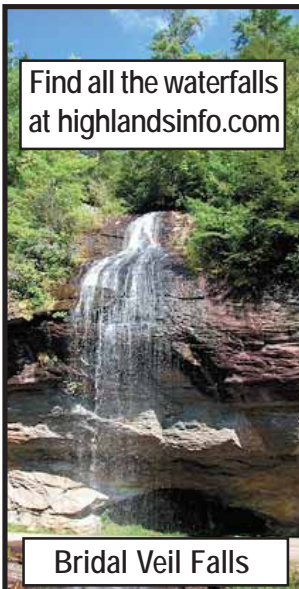
Egypt's road to democracy hit a pothole when President Morsi decreed himself omnipotent.

According to The Independent: “The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt has called for a mass demonstration in Cairo this week to show support for the embattled President, Mohamed Morsi, who is facing widespread protests over his controversial decree granting him extensive new powers. In a statement published on its website, the Brotherhood also called for demonstrations in public squares across the country after early evening prayers recently.

The latest blow to Mr. Morsi came when the Supreme Judicial Council, Egypt's highest body of judges, called the move by the President to grant himself near-absolute power an “unprecedented assault” on the judiciary. Through their statement, the judges joined a growing list of leaders and activists from Egypt's political factions, including some Islamists, who have denounced the decree Mr. Morsi says is necessary to ‘protect the revolution.’ The council's move reflects the anger within the judiciary.”

I wonder if Obama is watching with interest how Morsi's power grab plays out. For some strange reason, I have a feeling that a similar effort might happen here at some point in the next few years. We'll see.

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Sat. Dec. 1

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• Annual Olde Mountain Christmas Parade on Main Street at 11 a.m.

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• There will be a Christmas Carol Sing at First Presbyterian Church at 2pm on Saturday after the parade.



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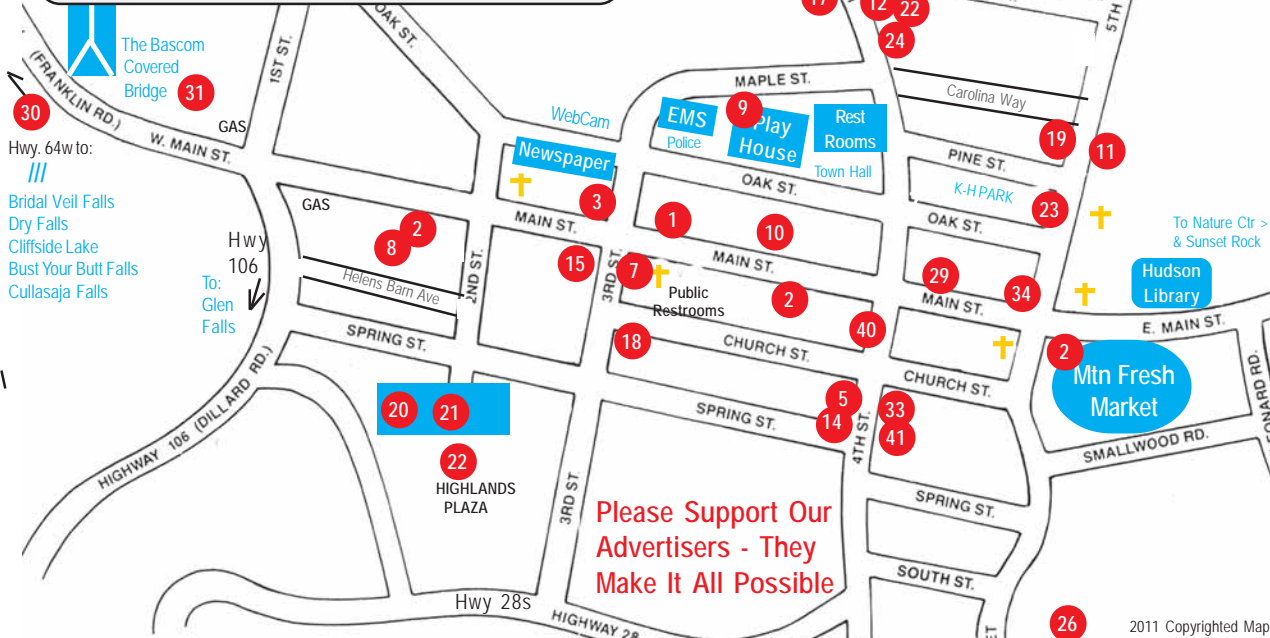


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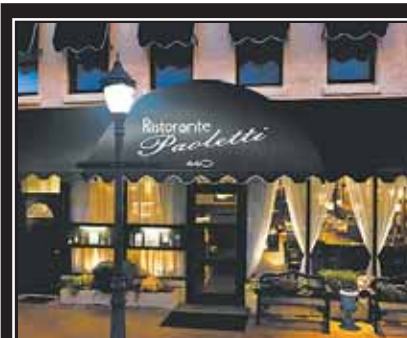
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