

# Highlands Newspaper

FREE every Thursday

Volume 11, Number 14

Internet PDF Version at [www.HighlandsNewspaperPDF.com](http://www.HighlandsNewspaperPDF.com)

Thursday, April 4, 2013

## Counterfeit 50s and 100s found in Highlands

The last day of February, a visiting trio tried to pass counterfeit 50- and 100-dollar bills in town.

After being picked up and arrested for shoplifting at Liel's Place on Main Street, at 12:30 p.m., counterfeit bills were found

on Kaylea Gail-Lynn Cannon, 18, of Clayton, GA. During the interview process, police learned that the trio – two girls and a guy – had passed two bills at Fibber Magees Closet earlier that day before visiting Liel's Place.

Fibber Magees Closet is the

second-hand clothes store in town which is manned by elderly volunteers.

The Thursday visit from the trio left the clerks frazzled and glad to see them go, said Director of Fibbers Mary Jellison.

"They ransacked the place,"

she said. "They broke hangers, took items off shelves and threw them on the floor. When they were ready to make their purchases my ladies were glad to see them go."

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## Non-profit seeks to meet MC childcare needs

By Davin Eldridge

A local non-profit is closing in on its goal of establishing a 24-hour childcare facility.

Last month, Christy Raby, executive director of Macon Childcare and Educational Center (MCEC) requested a letter of support from the Macon County Commission as part of a USDA rural economic development grant. The letter, which is currently being drafted by the county, is all part of a process to request grant funding from the federal government to operate a prospective facility on 2255 Old Murphy Road. MCEC received a similar letter of support from the Town of Franklin last month.

• See CHILDCARE page 5



Airman 1st Class Brandon Metrick, son of Lenny and Andrea Metrick of Highlands, is a 48th Communications Squadron cyber surety technician, who performs cyber surety operations. He is stationed at Royal Air Force Lakenheath, England.

Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Stephen Linch

## Local Airman Brandon Metrick tells how to fight junk email

News reached Highlanders Lenny and Andrea Metrick about work their son Brandon has been doing as a cyber surety technician from his Air Force base in Suffolk, England.

In an article about spam and junk email, he offers insight about junk email and spam messages.

Spam messages may look to be from trusted sources, but may be "phishing" for personal information. Remember, no legitimate

organization will ever ask for personal information or account credentials through email messages or pop-ups, he says.

According to Airman 1st Class Brandon Metrick, 48th Communications Squadron, education is key at all levels, so it is important to be able to detect these scams and avoid becoming a victim of identity theft or computer viruses.

"There are a lot of malicious

• See METRICK page 2

## New ER doc at H-C Hospital says 'Hello'

By Dr. Gray H. Erlacher

I can hardly express how honored and privileged I feel to be joining Highlands Cashiers Hospital beginning in April as medical director for the emergency department and inpatient services. It is a perfect fit at the perfect time in my career, as well as timely for the hospital.

I was just getting to know Dr. David Wheeler, when I began working some shifts at HCH last fall. He was the medical director at HCH, an amazing doctor who served this area for about twenty years, until his untimely death in November. This was heartbreaking to the community, and left a void in the medical staffing for the hospital.

At the same time I had just finished nearly two years of travel assignments, more than ready to give up airports and long drives and being away from family. I was looking for a top-notch hospital that was close to my roots in the mountains.

Over the past ten years, my wife, Karen, and I have had the opportunity to travel all over the country. It's been a great adventure and it honed my medical skills adapting to different environments and populations.

I first came to the mountains in 1980 when I was accepted to Western Carolina University in Cullowhee. I worked in restau-

rants in Cashiers and Sylva while I was in school, and did part of my research for my Biology degree at the Highlands Biological Station in Highlands. Once I decided to be pre-med, I volunteered in the ER at CJ Harris Hospital in Sylva. It was a great experience; the doctors there really inspired me. Eventually, while I was still in college, both of my children were born at CJ Harris.

My son, Trevor, is working on a PhD in history at UNC, and my daughter, Mason, attends Southwestern Community College in Sylva and is working in couple of restaurants (following in my footsteps).

As part of my residency training, I travelled to Beijing to study acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine. I have had an interest in alternative medicine since the 1990's, especially bio-identical hormone therapy and nutrition. Although these are not therapies typically used in a hospital setting, it is important to understand a patient's beliefs and habits, as well as any supplements they are taking. There can be interactions between some herbs and medications, and it also now well-recognized that a patient's mental state is directly connected to healing and wellness.

I dragged Karen with me to Alaska, to work a three month

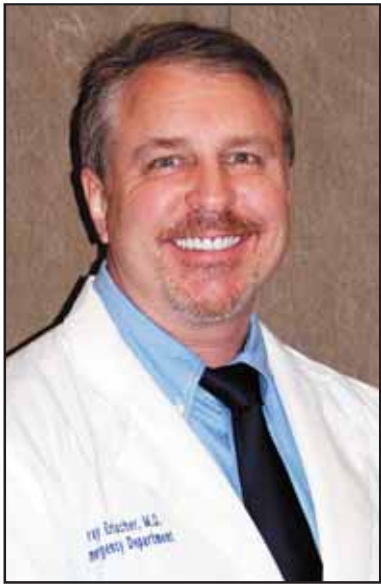
• See ER DOC page 2

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... DOC continued from page 1



Dr. Gray H. Erlacher

hospital assignment in the village of Barrow, 330 miles north of the Arctic Circle. When we got there in May, you could walk on the ocean because it was still frozen. The sun didn't set once until September; it just went around in a circle. We ate whale meat and caribou, and learned a lot about Inupiat Eskimo culture.

The three month stint turned into three years, when we ended up in Dillingham, Alaska which is mostly populated by the Yup'ik people. Many of the elders in outlying villages still speak the native language, which is so complicated almost no outsider has ever learned it fluently.

About once a month I would fly to remote villages in little 4-seater airplanes, sometimes in harsh weather, landing on gravel landing strips or just snow. Thank goodness Alaskan Bush pilots are said to be some of the best in the world. We would provide clinic for a few days in the village health center. One patient was an 88-year-

old woman who rode a snowmobile across ten miles of tundra to get to her appointment. Needless to say she was in excellent health!

I got spoiled living in Alaska, because it is an outdoorsman's paradise. Twenty-four inch Rainbow trout are standard fair, and the largest salmon fishery remaining in the world is in Bristol Bay. There was also plenty of moose meat, the mainstay dish at church potlucks in southwest Alaska.

Our time spent living in Alaska felt like it was a calling. Karen became the director of Dillingham Christian Youth Center, which gave much-needed safe place for the local teenagers to hang out and play.

Through a chain of events involving hurricane Katrina and a preacher with a bum hip, I ended up serving as an interim pastor for about 9 months at Dillingham Bible Fellowship. It helped me overcome any fear of public speaking I might have had before that!

We came back to the mountains of North Carolina so Karen could attend Western Carolina and I could work for the Indi-

an Health Service in Cherokee. I missed the southern highlands of North Carolina, and Karen, being from Wisconsin, had never lived here. Karen works as an Occupational Therapy Assistant, and has even covered part time here in the rehab department at HCH a few times.

I joined HCH at the end of last summer, as a 'locum tenens' physician, one who fills in as needed. This is a common practice today; in many Emergency Rooms, the doctor does not live locally, but travels some distance, even from out of state. When I got to Highlands I immediately loved the setting, the people, and the hospital itself.

I am excited to work in Highlands, because we have the best of both worlds: excellent medical care with a small town feel. We are able to provide very personalized service, and yet we can provide the same initial assessment and stabilization of medical emergencies that you would expect at much bigger hospitals. Folks in

• See DOC page 3

New Chamber/Visitor Center will open April 8

The Chamber of Commerce/Visitor Center is in the moving process and will be up and running in its new location at 108 Main Street (the old Nick's Restaurant) Monday, April 8. Phone service might be interrupted so if phone messages can't be left, staff can be found at the new location.

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

Email: HighlandsEditor@aol.com

Publisher/Editor - Kim Lewicki, Reporter - Davin Eldridge

Cartoonist - Karen Hawk; Digital Media - Jim Lewicki

Locally owned and operated Kim & Jim Lewicki

Adobe PDF version at [www.HighlandsInfo.com](http://www.HighlandsInfo.com)  
265 Oak St.; P.O. Box 2703, Highlands, N.C., 28741

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... METRICK continued from page 1

attackers that would like to take advantage of people's lack of knowledge," Metrick said. "It is important to be knowledgeable about different styles of cyber attacks."

Many email providers have spam and junk filters that work well, but email users should still be knowledgeable on the basic email threats, Metrick added.

If a spam email is mistakenly opened, it should be immediately closed and deleted without clicking on any of its contents.

Follow these steps to combat spam mail:

- Use email software with built-in spam filtering
- Only add people you know to your contacts list
- Validate the originating source by phone
- Place suspected spammers on your blocked list
- In Outlook, right click a message from the sender and follow the trail for "Junk Email" to "Block the sender"
- After taking actions to block the sender, permanently delete the message
- Shift+Delete will permanently delete a message in Outlook

Metrick is 23, is married to his high school sweetheart Kate Chapman and they have a two-year-old daughter, Kaylan. They live in Suffolk, England with their Husky, Blaze.

Metrick joined the Air Force and left for Basic Training in San Antonio, Texas, December 26, 2011.

He went to Tech School at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, MS, where he studied Cyber Surety. While there he joined the Drill Team and became the Drill Master leading his team to take 1st place in the Drill Down Competition in April of 2012.

He graduated from Tech School with honors and was promoted to an Airman First Class, July 3, 2012.

He has been stationed at Lakenheath Air Force Base in Suffolk, England since July 27, 2012.

Though Metrick has always done Cyber Surety for the Air Force, he has also recently been teaching emergency care and first-response to the other airmen on base.

He is also a 2011 graduate of North Georgia Technical College where he earned a degree in Fire Fighting and EMS. He holds a Fire Fighter 1 & 2 license and a National Registered EMT-Intermediate license. His father, Lenny, has been a volunteer member of the Highlands Fire & Rescue Department for years.

The Metrics are enjoying their stay in England where they spend their free time exploring and visiting castles, but they miss home and hope Brandon's next assignment will land him on the Florida gulf coast or in Georgia.

Meanwhile, his parents and his brother and sister-in-law, Chris and Brittany, will be spending 17 days with them in England over the Christmas holiday.



## ... DOC continued from page 2

Highlands, Cashiers, and Glenville have top notch healthcare right in their back yard.

Three conditions that we particularly strive to provide "NASCAR-speed" attention are acute strokes, acute heart attacks, and major trauma. I believe we need to practice our skills, so that when it counts we're ready. I especially like to run a "disaster" drill at least once a year, when lo-

cal high school kids get to dress up as accident victims and we test our system. The hospital must be always ready to coordinate with local emergency personnel, fire departments and law enforcement.

I want people to be educated about the signs and symptoms of stroke and heart attack, so they don't delay coming in. The sooner you get to the hospital the better, because in some cases there are treatments

## ... COUNTERFEIT continued from page 1

They bought \$80 and some change worth of items, gave the clerk two fake 50s and of course got real change back.

"So Fibbers is basically out \$100," said Jellison.

After processing Cannon, the police visited Fibbers and happened to pull up just as Jellison was leaving with the day's deposit.

Knowing the group had been to Fibbers, the police asked if they had received any 50s. Jellison pulled the two bills out of the deposit bag and saw they were fake.

She said the color was off and the two bills had the same serial number; something her clerks didn't notice.

"They were so upset at the way the group was acting in the shop they were just glad to see them leave and didn't think to check the bills," she said.

Police Chief Bill Harrell said the bills "looked realistic enough" and has far as he knows Fibbers was the only place the group used the counterfeit bills.

The guy in the group, Zachary Robert

Downs, 29, of Dillard, GA, was across the street at another establishment when Cannon was picked up for shoplifting, so it wasn't until March 1 that he was arrested for possessing counterfeit currency, stealing and destroying criminal evidence and resisting arrest.

"We determined from the interview with Cannon that he was with the two girls at Fibbers and so was also responsible for the episode that occurred there," said Police Chief Bill Harrell.

The counterfeiting case was referred to the Secret Service because in the U.S. all counterfeiting is the Secret Service's responsibility, said Harrell.

He said it's the department's understanding that the Secret Service headed to Bryson City, NC, where it believes the counterfeiting ring originated.

Meanwhile, Jellison said she's purchasing the markers used to determine currency validity so this doesn't happen again.

— Kim Lewicki

## • OBITUARY •

### Louis Eugene 'Bud' Potts

Louis Eugene "Bud" Potts, age 88, of Highlands, NC, died Monday, April 1, 2013. He was born in Macon County, the son of the late Samuel Eugene Potts and Alice Reese Potts. He is survived by his wife of 42 years, Mary Summer Potts. He was a Postmaster for Highlands and a US Navy Veteran serving during World War II. He was a member of Shortoff Baptist Church, where he was a choir member; he was also a member of Glenville VFW, and the Highlands American Legion. He served as treasurer for the Fireman's Relief Fund and was a member of the Highlands School Scholarship Committee.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by a daughter, Debbie Norman of Hope Mills, NC; four sisters, Doris Potts and Betty Little and her husband C. J. all of Lawrenceville, GA, Emily Houston and her husband Gene of Rabun Gap, GA and Linda Calloway and her husband Joe of Ocala, FL; a sister-in-law, Sue Potts of Highlands, NC; three grandchildren, Amber, Kevin and Ashley; two great-grandchildren, Jacob and Jayden.

He was preceded in death by four brothers, Clarence Potts, Harry Potts, Leon "Dead-eye" Potts, and Richard Potts.

Funeral services will be held Thursday, April 4 at 2 pm at the First Baptist Church of Highlands with Rev. Andy Cloer officiating. Burial will be in Highlands Memorial Park Cemetery. The Franklin VFW Post #7339 and American Legion Post #108 will conduct military graveside rites. Nephews will serve as pallbearers. Honorary pallbearers will be the Highlands Fire Department. The family will receive friends from 1- 2 pm, one hour prior to the service at the church.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Highlands Fire Department, PO Box 460, Highlands, NC 28741 or to Shortoff Baptist Church, PO Box 1217, Highlands, NC.

that we can provide to minimize the damage to the heart, in the case of heart attacks, or the brain, in the case of a stroke.

I have heard that there has been only one baby born at HCH (New Campus), although we do have all the right equipment if the need arises. I practiced OB earlier in my career, logging over 800 deliveries. The miracle of birth is one of the most amazing things we get to witness in medicine. Though there is no talk of a birthing center at HCH, if there ever is an emergency delivery, we will be ready.

There are a lot of exciting things in the future for HCH, including new construction at the Fidelia Eckerd Living Center, expansion of our electronic medical records system, and the recruitment of other providers. I will be staffing the Emergency Department on a regular basis, functioning as an attending physician on the Inpatient Unit, and also visiting patients in the Living Center. As far as my administrative duties, I plan to enter this with my eyes and ears open, ready to listen. It isn't like there is a broken system that needs fixing; HCH is already a smooth running machine. My goal is to look to the future and see where we need to go, to continue providing excellence in healthcare to every single patient who walks in our door.

One of the most important things I want medical students to know is to listen to their patient. The famous doctor Will-

iam Osler said, "Listen to your patient, he is telling you the diagnosis." I want HCH to be known as the hospital that listens to its patients.

I'm looking forward to meeting local and seasonal residents and exploring the area when I'm not in the hospital. I especially want to try a little trout fishing this spring, and do some local hiking and camping. Every day I wake up in Highlands, I can't believe that I live in such a beautiful place.

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# • HIGHLANDS AREA UPCOMING EVENTS •

**Mon., Wed., Fri.**

- Step Aerobics with Tina Rogers 8-9a beginning April 1.
- Zumba at the Rec Park, 9:05a-10a. \$5 per class. First class free.

**Monday & Wednesday**

- Hatha Yoga – Body n' Soul. 7:45a at First Presbyterian Church. R.Y.T and Y.A. (828) 482-2128. (8/29)

**Monday & Thursday**

- Hatha Yoga – Body n' Soul. 10:45a at the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation. R.Y.T and Y.A. (828) 482-2128. (8/29)

**Tues., April 2**

- Highlands Dialogue at Hudson Library from 10-11:30a, "Drones: Ethics, Benefits and Liabilities of Their Increasing Use." Handout available at the Library (also e-mailed). Coordinator: Carole Light. For more information about the Highlands Dialogue or if you desire to be added to our mailing list, please e-mail John Gaston johngaston@aol.com or Karen Hawk

hwkncrw@earthlink.net.

**Thurs., April 4**

- Taize at HUMC at 5:30p.
- The Rotary Club of Highlands and Boy Scout Troop 207 of Highlands will hold a Bingo night for Scouting 6:30p until 8:30p at the Community Building. Chick-A-fillet sandwiches, baked beans, chips and soft drinks will be served for a nominal donation. Scout Bingo is a great way to assist the Troop 207 in continuing its programs, outings and equipment needs for the remainder of this year. Bingo is great fun for you and your friends. Sponsor tables are available. There will be 15 games played, with intermissions. Each Bingo card is \$1 per game and you may play single or multiple cards per game. The last game is the Big Game and that winner will win the Grand Jackpot. Boy Scout Bingo is open to all is a great family night event. Come join in the fun! Please contact Bill Edwards 526-9594 for information,

**Monday, April 8**

- Mini Clean-up in town from 5-7p. Meet at the new chamber/visitor center at 108 Main Street Call Jennifer Smathers at 526-2112 for info.

**Tues., April 9**

- Come and listen to stories at the Story Swap at 7:30 pm, at the Ugly Dog Pub at 294 S. Fourth St. in Highlands. If you have a 3-7 minute story to tell or read, call 369-1927. Pre-registration is required.

**Wednesday, April 10**

- Mini Clean-up in town from 5-7p. Meet at the new chamber/visitor center at 108 Main Street. Call Jennifer Smathers at 526-2112 for info.

- The High Mountain Squares will dance this Wednesday night, at the Macon County Community Building on Route 441 South from 6:30 to 9p. Marty Northrup from Columbus, NC will be the caller. We dance Western Style Square Dancing, main/stream and plus levels. There will be a Plus Workshop from 6:30 to 7p. Everyone is welcome. For information call 828-349-0905, 828-524-2280, 828-226-1334, or [www.highmountainsquares.org](http://www.highmountainsquares.org)

**Saturday, April 13**

- Gorge Clean-Up Day & Cook-Out at Cliffside Lake shelter. Meet at the new chamber/visitor center at 108 Main Street for breakfast at 8:30a. Areas will be assigned. Call Jennifer Smathers at 526-2112 for info.

- Relay for Life Highlands Kickoff Celebration from 5-7p at the Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. Appetizers, drinks, raffle prizes, relay information and fire truck and station tours. For more information call 526-1841.

**Wed., April 17**

- Free movie at the Hudson Library. "Arbitrage." Rated R.

**Thurs. April 18**

- Taize at Holy Family Lutheran Church at 5:30p.

**Sat., April 20**

- A benefit for Tommy Houston at Highlands Civic Center from 3:30-9:30p. Tommy has heart trouble and had to stay one in ICU at Mission Hospital. Tommy does not have any health insurance and has a lot of medical expenses. Come and enjoy a hot dog dinner, singing, and auction.

- Earth Day and Summer volunteer opportunities at the Highlands Biological Garden. Work is needed on trails, near the garden entrance and fern and woodland loop trails from 10a to noon. To participate in the Earth Day Volunteer Celebration, or any of the monthly workdays, call Erika Selman know in advance (828) 526-0188 or e-mailing [emselman@email.wcu.edu](mailto:emselman@email.wcu.edu).

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## Rec Park News

The Recreation Department is now accepting application for Lifeguards for the Summer. We will be offering a Lifeguard course in late April and early May.

Anyone interested in Putting a team in the Men's Competitive Softball League needs to Contact Lester Norris By April 26th. Call 526-3556.

Anyone interested in Putting a team in the Adult Recreation League Softball needs to Contact Lester Norris By April 26th. Call 526-3556.

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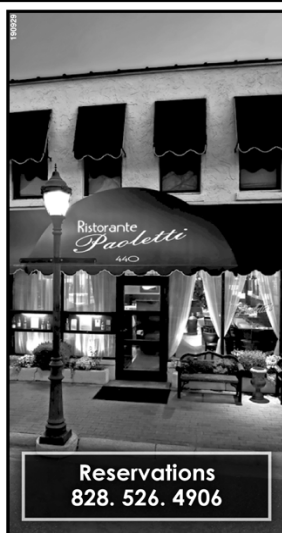
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## • LEGISLATIVE UPDATE ... IN THEIR WORDS •

• In this weekly series, legislators will inform constituents of their dealings in Washington, Raleigh and Macon County – in their own words.

### Hagan urges VA Secretary to dispatch additional personnel to address claims backlog *In letter to Secretary Shinseki, Hagan cites alarming statistics about backlog and wait times for NC veterans*

Washington, DC - U.S. Senator Kay Hagan has sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) requesting that Secretary Eric Shinseki dispatch senior VA officials from VA headquarters to North Carolina to help the Winston-Salem regional office address its backlog of claims. More than 7,000 veterans have been waiting at least a year for that office to rule on their disability claims and more than 700 veterans have been waiting more than two years.

"While the figures alone are alarming, and I am also greatly concerned that the current system in place in the Winston-Salem office is not capable of clearing this backlog," writes Hagan. "For that reason, I am asking you to take a personal interest in solving this issue and dispatch senior officials from the VA Headquarters in Washington to North Carolina to ensure the Winston-Salem regional office receives the necessary assistance and resources to rapidly address their backlog and adopt procedures to prevent similar problems from occurring again in the future."

In the last year, delays for disability claims have gotten worse for North Carolina veterans. Most claims from North Carolina veterans are processed at the Winston-Salem office, including those from the Fayetteville and Cape Fear region. On average it takes the Veterans Benefits Administration's claims office in Winston-Salem 341 days to process a claim, up from 329 in September. The wait time is the second longest in the Agency's southeastern region.

"I'm sure you agree that these de-



lays, which fall far short of the Agency's stated goal of processing all claims within 125 days, are deplorable," wrote Hagan in her letter to Shinseki.

Senator Hagan has made protecting and improving benefits for North Carolina veterans a top priority in her office. This week, the President signed her bipartisan amendment to restore the Tuition Assistance program for servicemembers into law as a part of the fiscal year 2013 funding legislation. The Senate also approved a Hagan amendment to create room in the budget for deficit-neutral legislation to improve health care, education, and job training opportunities for veterans and military families.

• Hagan, who serves on the Senate Armed Services Committee, comes from a strong military family. Her father-in-law was a two-star Marine General; her brother and father served in the Navy; her husband, Chip, is a Vietnam veteran who used the GI Bill to help pay for law school; and she has two nephews who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

• [www.hagan.senate.gov/contact/](http://www.hagan.senate.gov/contact/)

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## ... CHILDCARE from page 1

"There is a growing need for child care in Macon County," said Raby. "Especially for the amount of parents that we have, who work second and third shifts -- for those parents, there is little to no chance of receiving child care."

According to a recent county-sponsored study on the state of public child care in Macon County, the need for such care is significant and growing. Currently, Macon County has a preschool population of approximately 2,161 children. For these children, there are approximately 678 slots available county-wide -- an almost 70% shortfall in childcare availability. Such figures have been determined by the county's Child Care Issues Committee, established in 2009.

"It's a quality of life issue," remarked County Commissioner Ronnie Beale, who has been at the forefront of the need for childcare for more than four years. "Studies show that children perform better in [elementary] school when they have had good, quality early childcare." Furthermore, Beale added that the greatest need for childcare in Macon County exists for children under the age of two -- a 173% shortfall.

The situation is so dire, in fact, that new facilities would only provide temporary relief for local families. "When that facility [MCEC] comes to fruition, our need will continue," said Beale.

MCEC seeks to provide 24-hour services for a maximum of 120 children per work shift at the facility and the organization expects to generate more than 35 employee positions. The nearly 10,000 sq. ft. facility sits on four acres of land. MCEC plans to teach youngsters several areas of early education with music, arts, crafts and basic computer teachers lined up to work. Children from six weeks to six years old are set to be handled by the facility.

The federal grant MCEC seeks to receive would fund operational costs for the facility. The total amount of the grant has not been confirmed, according to Raby. "We're still waiting. We applied for the grant, and we're applying for a business loan. We feel pretty confident that we'll get the building," said Raby.

But groundwork has been underway for the facility for some time now. Last year, the Town of Franklin allocated municipal sewer and water services to the facility. "We are confident that what we are working on will provide a great service to the county and its growing population of families," said Raby.

• See CHILDCARE page 14

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## Real Estate Recovery: See it, believe it...and now invest in it!

After several years in the real estate doldrums, second-home sales are enjoying a healthy comeback across the country.

According to the most recent industry figures from the National Association of Realtors (NAR), 2011 sales of vacation homes, which are second homes primarily used by buyers, rose 7%. Sales of investment properties - homes bought as investments and not for personal vacation purposes - surged nearly 65%. Combined, investment properties and vacation homes accounted for 38% of all homes sold in the United States in 2011.

The latest reading of the Case-Shiller House Price Index went positive on a year-over-year basis for the first time in 21 months.

Walter Molony, an NAR Spokesman, says statistics for 2012 won't be released until



**Jody Lovell**  
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later this spring, but anecdotal information points to continued growth in the second-home market last year. He says the conditions responsible for the improvement in 2011 are solidifying across the country, and the results should be stronger sales for vacation homes in the future.

Beyond the low interest rates and lower property values, Molony says consumers are feeling more confident, thanks to a stronger economy and rising equity markets. Such factors bode well for the second-home market in 2013 and beyond.

Long term demographics show that the second home sector should remain strong for years to come. More than 42 million baby boomers are between 50 and 59. People in this age range account for the lion's share of second home purchases. Another 43.5 million Americans are between the ages of 40 and 49, and many of them will soon be thinking about buying vacation homes of their own.

We see more philosophical reasons for the new second-home market boom. As couples become empty nesters, they are downsizing their primary homes but still want a family gathering place which may become their own primary residence someday.

For those who want to join in the vacation-home market, but have yet to take the plunge, buyers can still find attractive opportunities here on the Plateau. However, these deals won't last forever.

If you are a buyer, you should seriously consider purchasing your dream home this year as prices will start rising as inventory declines. As validation of the healthy increase in sales, Exurbia Sotheby's International Realty is up 74% of closed sales in the first quarter of 2013 as compared to 2012. Thank you to all of our friends and clients for their continued support and friendship. Happy Spring!

Jody and Wood Lovell own Exurbia Sotheby's International Realty, local leaders in the real estate market for thirteen years, with two locations: one in The Old Edwards Inn complex in downtown Highlands and one at the gate of Cullasaja Club of Highlands. Jody was again the Number One Agent out of 300 members on the entire MLS in 2012 in the sale of residential properties. Call them at (828) 526-4104 for your real estate needs.

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# • COACH'S CORNER •

## Final Four Preview



**Ryan Potts**  
tryanpotts@hotmail.com

Orange because they are so long and athletic and rarely give up open three point shots (since you cannot penetrate and kick against their zone the way you would against man to man). The reason that I favor Michigan in this game is because Mitch McGary has played like an elite big man in this tournament, and his presence around the basket will force Syracuse to honor the paint and allow Nik Stauskas and Trey Burke to get some open three point looks. On offense, Syracuse will struggle with the athleticism of the Michigan lineup, and I don't think that they have the scoring punch to get it done against the Wolverines. Michigan 68-63

Thus, my finals matchup of Louisville and Michigan would provide an excellent matchup of guards with Trey Burke, Russ Smith, Peyton Siva. I think Louisville is a team on a mission, especially after the gruesome injury to Kevin Ware. Just like I have it in my original bracket, I have Louisville winning it all.

Shockers, for them to win this game, UL is going to have to play down a notch from the level they have been at. I think WSU has a punchers chance in this game, primarily because UL's one weakness is a lack of outside shooting, but WSU will have to play a clean game against UL's pressure defense. I have UL in this one 75-68

### Syracuse vs. Michigan

People will look at this game and feel Michigan has a great chance against Syracuse because they have great outside shooting, but that is somewhat inaccurate. Great three-point shooting teams rarely are successful against the

Naturally, of the four picks I made for the Final Four last week, the only one I got right was the one I had hoped to get wrong. Anyway, Duke ran into a buzzsaw last week, as did Florida and Marquette. There was really only one competitive Elite Eight game, and I think that is a result of parity. When it comes down to this time of year, a team has to play well every night. All four Final Four teams are playing at a high level right now, but outside of Louisville, none of the other three teams have been consistent enough to count on this year.

### Wichita State vs. Louisville

This is a matchup of the two teams who have played consistently excellent basketball through all 4 games of the tournament thus far. Wichita State has been unreal on the glass this tournament, and thoroughly outplayed the Buckeyes despite allowing a referee-aided comeback that made the game look tighter than it was. Unfortunately for the

## Lady Highlanders earn draw vs. Rabun Gap

By Ryan Potts

The Highlands Lady Highlanders soccer team has been raising some eyebrows with its play as of late, and further evidence of that came last week when they earned a hard fought tie with the Rabun Gap Lady Eagles.

Highlands had played Rabun Gap tough on the girls' side in recent years, but could never quite break through with a result. However, the improvement of the Lady Highlanders was shown last week, as Mary Gillian Renfro scored two goals for Highlands, and the defense held firm to earn a 2-2 tie vs. the Lady Eagles.

Midfielder Kirstyn Lamb assisted on both of Renfro's goals, and the effort of the team as a whole earned high praise from Coach Jeff Weller.

"The girls played awesome," said Weller, "they really hung in

there and played as a team... hopefully we will build off of this."

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host the Lady Panthers of Franklin tonight at Highlands School- please come out and support your Lady Highlanders!

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# Spring Home Improvement

## Five bargain renovations that add value

*Deliver big bang for little buck*

Do you have grand visions of gutting your dated kitchen, or maybe blowing out the bathroom walls to create a spa-like retreat? While major remodeling projects such as these can bring value to a home, budget-friendly projects can also deliver a fresh look - and real value for you and potential buyers.

"Something as simple as replacing the hardware in the kitchen can give you a whole new look," says Paul Wyman, a regional vice president with the National Association of Realtors. Wyman is also an expert at determining if a remodeling project will add value to a home.

Curious which simple projects will give your home the most value? Keep reading to learn about a few affordable facelifts and bargain renovations that could boost your home's value and add appeal.

### **Bargain Renovation #1: Reface Kitchen Cabinets**

Would you believe that something as simple as replacing dated cabinetry doors could get you a higher return on investment than other major remodels? We didn't either, until Remodeling Magazine's 2011-2012 "Cost vs. Value Report" told us otherwise.

If the cabinets in your kitchen are well laid-out, sturdy, and plentiful but unappealing, refacing can be a cost-effective alternative to complete replacement. This process, which maintains the existing cabinetry's frames and boxes but replaces the hardware and door and drawer fronts, can be just a quarter of the price of installing all-new cabinetry.

What does that look like in hard figures? Kitchen Solvers, a resurfacing company in La Crosse, Wisc., offers the example of a client paying \$6,000 to install solid cherry doors

on existing cabinetry, rather than shelling out \$24,000 to install everything new. That sure sounds like a good savings to us.

### **Bargain Renovation #2: Install a New Kitchen Countertop**

If you adore the luxurious look of a stone countertop but don't love the high price, there are ways to achieve the high-end feel of granite or marble without breaking the bank.

You can save on granite, for example, by buying remnants from a stone yard, according to a July 2012 Consumer Reports article titled "Get the luxury look for Less." Or, if you have your eye on marble, a slab from Vermont will cost at least 20 percent less than one from Italy, according to the report.

For a truly budget-friendly option, Consumer Reports suggests that you consider a laminate countertop.

Laminate, which is made of sheets of plastic resin and paper bonded to particle board or fiberboard, could resemble granite or marble with today's printing technologies, notes Consumer Reports.

### **Bargain Renovation #3: Update the Bathroom**

According to HGTV's "Maximum Value Projects," on FrontDoor.com, updating a bathroom is a great way to add value to your home. And it doesn't take much to make a big difference.

In fact, HGTV says updating the sink and fixtures will yield more value than replacing the countertop, flooring, toilet, or even the tub and shower. To avoid the premium price and save "hundreds of dollars without compromising quality," Consumer Reports' bathroom remodeling guide recommends selecting sinks and fixtures with basic finish-



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# Spring Home Improvement

es.

Looking for more value-adding updates that are gentle on your wallet? Consumer Reports suggests replacing an outdated wall-to-wall mirror with individual framed mirrors over each sink, or replacing stained grout with stain-resistant grout.

## **Bargain Renovation #4: Boost Curb Appeal With a New Roof**

Honestly, who looks at a roof? Homebuyers, evidently. Even if most of your roof isn't visible from the street, it is still an important aesthetic and functional feature that's in a prime position to elevate - or squash - your home's curb appeal.

"When people buy a house, they expect it to have a roof, but if it's recently been redone, they will really see the value in that," Wyman says.

Fortunately, for a flashy and durable roof, you don't have to select a costly specialty material - like slate, tile, or metal. Composite asphalt shingles is the most common material, and it fits easily in



many types of budgets, according to HGTV's "Maximum Value Home Exterior Projects: Roof."

Composite shingles are now available in a wide range of styles and colors, according to HGTV, allowing homeowners to create a custom look that matches the home's façade or plays up its architectural details.

## **Bargain Renovation #5: Add a Deck**

Looking for a new living space that will add value to your home? Look no further than the square footage wait-

ing right outside your back door.

In fact, adding a deck to your home could offer one of the highest cost-recoup opportunities, according to the cost-value report. And you don't have to choose a high-priced composite material. The survey found that decks built with wood actually delivered a greater return at resale than those built with composite material - boasting a 70 percent return on cost, compared to 62.8 percent.

Because deck-building is a potential DIY project - depending on your familiarity with a power saw, of course - savings could be even higher.

"Any type of work you have the ability to do yourself, with quality, makes it a bigger bargain because you're saving on labor costs," Wyman points out.

But if your home improvement skills are a little iffy, or you would rather sit back and relax during the renovation, it's probably best to leave this one up to the pros.

— by Amy Howell Hirt, YahooHomes



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Galatians 5:5

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Ezekiel 36:26 says “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” This is a picture of the coming new covenant. You enter this life with a dead heart or as he says a heart of stone. That heart makes it impossible for you to hear and understand anything spiritual. With a new heart of flesh and a new living spirit you will be able to see your need of a Savior. You will be enabled to hear the truth and will out of a love for it, obey its teaching. Jesus Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh to make possible these two wonderful gifts. With his death on the cross, your new heart was prepared. With his resurrection, the sending of the new spirit was made ready. Galatians 5:5 “But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope.” Paul lays before you a very simplistic view of the gospel. Don’t be slack in the study of these few words. In this short sentence, Paul gives you all you need to understand this glorious salvation.

He makes clear everything required for you to come through the Spirit into this salvation. Your salvation was not by human striving, nor by the will of the human heart. Your salvation is a supernatural work, performed by the Holy Spirit, coming into your heart and changing it, working in your mind, renewing it, changing your want to, driving you to Christ. You cannot come to Christ by your own efforts. You don’t have the strength required to turn to Jesus by yourself (John 6:44).

In Genesis 6:5 it’s pointed out that the intents and thoughts of a man’s heart are continually evil. Jeremiah 17:9 says “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.” The essence of this is that man has a sinful, an evil nature. Man loves the spiritual darkness in which he lives. John 3:19-20 “Men loved darkness rather than light” and they “do not come to the light.” Paul in Romans 3 explains “There is none righteous . . . . There is none who understands . . . . There is none who does good . . . . There is none who seeks after God.” There is not one man who will take himself out of the darkness into the light by his own initiative.

In the fourth century, there was an English Monk named Pelagius, who began to teach that man could take the initial steps toward God and his own salvation apart from God’s grace. The great fourth century theologian Augustine opposed this teaching and it was ultimately condemned by the council of Ephesus in 431 A. D.. The church has maintained throughout history the teaching that it takes a miracle of grace to save someone. The Holy Spirit must work a change in the heart of man for him to be able to believe in Jesus Christ. The Gospel of John clearly declares you must be “born again” to be a part of the kingdom of God. It also teaches when you are “born again” it is “not of blood, nor of the

• See SPIRITUALLY page 11

John 3:16 • PLACES TO WORSHIP • Proverbs 3:5

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## ... SPIRITUALLY continued from page 10

will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Your salvation is the exclusive work of God. He initiates the process and carries it through to perfect completion. You are born into this world in a spiritually dead state. You are spiritually blind and totally without spiritual strength. Therefore, until you are given spiritual life, spiritual sight, and spiritual strength you are totally incapable of believing anything spiritual.

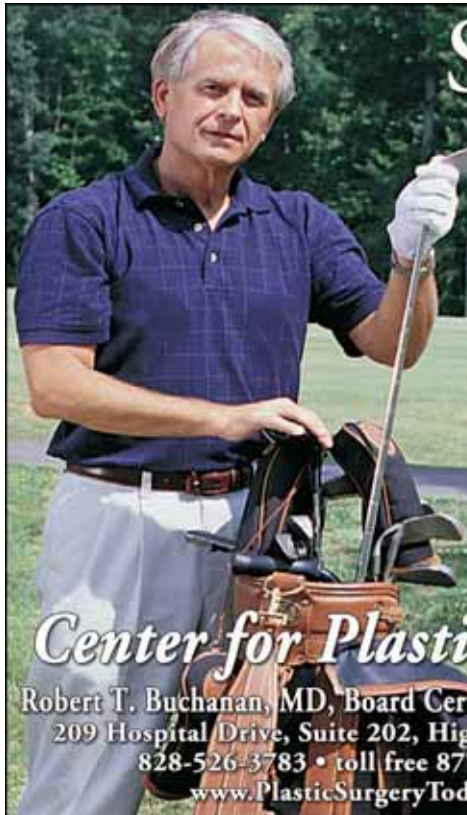
Paul says your righteousness comes "through the Spirit." This means your salvation is not through your moral and religious works. It does not come by your own effort at being good. It does not come because you have been careful to keep the law. Only when the Holy Spirit works in your heart to make it anew will you be saved. The initial act of your salvation belongs to God alone (Ephesians 2:8-9). You can love God only because he first loved you (1 John 4:19). You are "in Christ Jesus" only because of

his working in your heart.

Christianity does not operate by natural principles. It is not defined by simply learning or merely accepting a doctrine or creed. It is also not simply the act of deciding to follow a certain person. In our day Christianity has become more of a decision making religion. Terry Johnson, pastor of Independent Presbyterian in Savannah, Georgia calls it "decisional Christianity." Which would declare "I saved myself by making a decision to follow Jesus." Please understand, people do not become Christians by simply comparing the various choices different religions offer, evaluating the benefits pro and con, and then, through rational thinking choose the best offer. Many people today believe they were saved because they walked an isle, signed a card, raised their hand or prayed a certain prayer. They think, "I made a decision." But the truth, according to the Scriptures is that they were not capable, nor willing, to make such a ra-

tional decision. The only hope for such a proper decision had to come with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Man will always choose darkness over light even though that is a totally irrational decision. Natural man has no desire to follow Christ (John 1:10). Christianity is not a natural religion, it is a supernatural religion. No one can become a Christian except it be "through the Spirit." Jesus says in John 15:16 you did not choose me, I chose you.

Don't misunderstand this. Jesus in saying this, was not denying the fact, you make a decision to follow him. What he is saying is your decision comes only after he has changed your heart and given you the gifts of faith and repentance. The critical decision was not yours but his. It was only because of his decision that yours was possible. You, my friends, are not saved by your own efforts, intelligence, and strength but "through the Spirit" as he brings you to recognize Jesus as the one and only Savior.



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... **CHILDCARE** continued from page 5

In a letter presented to aldermen last year, Child Care Issues Committee member and Town Planner Derek Roland, the facility was lauded for the positive economic impact it would have on the county.

"While benefitting the child, the childcare industry tremendously benefits the local economy as well. A study by Cornell University found that for every job created in the childcare industry, 1.45 jobs are created throughout the local economy," Roland said. "Aside from serving as a main draw for new business coming into the area, childcare also contributes to the functionality and efficiency of existing businesses as well. One in 10 workers in North Carolina has a child under 6. In a survey by the Economic Opportunity Institute, nearly 30% of workers knew employees who quit their jobs because of inadequate childcare availability. This employee turnover is estimated to cost as much as 1.5 times an employee's salary."

According to Pat Hedden, director of the Highlands Community Child Development Center, which serves children

from of six weeks old to five years, the greatest challenge facing childcare is its affordability. "Everything is getting more expensive, and payrates are staying the same," she said. The Highlands facility costs approximately \$635 per month per child.

Hedden echoed Beale and Raby saying the need for childcare is ever-increasing. "The need is growing and growing. We have parents coming here all the way from Tox-away because there is no childcare in their own communities." The facility, which is at capacity, is licensed to handle 66 children.

In step with Hedden, Beale warns any newcomers interested in establishing a childcare facility, that there is an abundance of work and planning involved. "They really need to do their homework," he said, citing licensing fees, fire, health and safety guidelines, payroll and staffing, adequate area and instructional methods as but a few factors in starting a facility. "It's not a simple process of 'Hey, let's start a daycare facility,'" said Hedden.

• **BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NEWS** •

**Wick Ashburn and Leslie Ashburn Cook join White Oak Realty Group**



Wick Ashburn



Leslie Ashburn Cook

Susie deVile Owner/Broker-in-Charge, has announced that Wick Ashburn and Leslie Ashburn Cook have joined White Oak Realty Group, a Highlands, NC real estate firm.

Wick Ashburn and his family have resided in Highlands full time since 1985, when he began his real estate career in the area. Having been a real estate attorney in his native Savannah, GA for 12 years, he and his wife Margie decided to make Highlands home. In 1987, Wick launched Coldwell Banker Ashburn Real Estate and enjoyed a very successful career earning the company's highest awards for 14 consecutive years, including the International President's Elite and the International President's Premier awards.

Wick is also a past President of Highlands Chamber of Commerce and is an alumnus of the Leadership Highlands Program.

"Leslie and I are thrilled about our affiliation with White Oak Realty Group and the opportunity to be a part of a such a successful and dynamic, entrepreneurial team," said Wick Ashburn. "Leslie and I look forward to bringing our combined three decades of real estate experience to serving our Buyer and Seller clients in this ever-strengthening real estate market and to helping them achieve their goals via an extraordinary experience."

Leslie Ashburn Cook, having grown up in a family of realtors and land developers from Savannah, GA, comes by her love of real estate quite naturally. She was raised in Highlands and graduated from Newberry College in 2005 with a degree in Math Education. In 2005, she earned her Brokers license and began her real estate career,

working alongside her father, Wick.

Leslie has served in many capacities on the Highlands-Cashiers Board of Realtor including Secretary, Treasure and Vice-President, and is also an alumnus of the Leadership Highlands program.

"We are absolutely honored and overjoyed that Wick and Leslie have joined White Oak Realty Group," said Susie deVile. "They possess deep real estate marketing and sales experience, an unparalleled work ethic, and devotion to client service."

"When you combine mastery, leadership, drive, an entrepreneurial spirit, and service above self, you have a fierce formula for real estate success," said deVile. "Wick and Leslie most certainly will be a huge asset to White Oak Realty Group's clients, as well as to the firm overall."

Wick may be reached at (828) 421-0500 or [wick@AshburnRealEstate.com](mailto:wick@AshburnRealEstate.com). Leslie may be reached at (828) 421-5113 or [leslie@AshburnRealEstate.com](mailto:leslie@AshburnRealEstate.com). White Oak Realty Group's sales office is located at 125 South Fourth Street in the heart of the retail district in Highlands. For more information, visit [WhiteOakRG.com](http://WhiteOakRG.com) or call (828) 526-8118.

**Benefit for Tommy Houston at the Rec Park**

On Saturday, April 20, there will be a benefit for Tommy Houston at Highlands Civic Center from 3:30-9:30p. Tommy has heart trouble and had to stay one in ICU at Mission Hospital. Tommy does not have any health insurance and has a lot of medical expenses. Come and enjoy a hot dog dinner, singing, and auction.



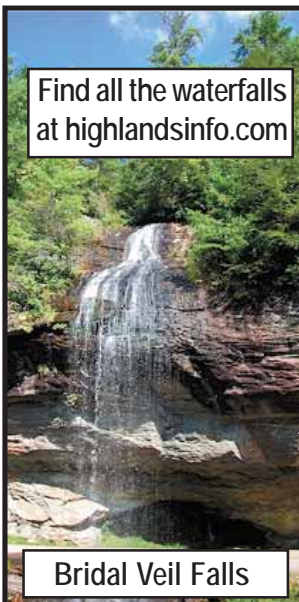
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Above left: Edward Burtynsky, *Rock of Ages #1 (detail)*, 1991



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