

Highlands Newspaper

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Thursday, Feb. 28, 2013

Police investigating rash of break-ins/burglaries

Last Saturday, Feb. 23, between the hours of 3:30 and 9 p.m. five business were broken into and items stolen.

Luckily, the culprit (s) didn't get much for his/her efforts.

At 3:05 p.m. a burglary with

forcible entry and criminal damage to property was reported at Paolotti Restaurant on Main Street where someone broke through the back door which is on Oak Street Alley.

At 5:11 p.m. criminal damage

to property was reported at Main Street Pharmacy where someone opened two doors downstairs and damaged the rear entry door, both off Oak Street Alley.

At 6:30 p.m., a burglary with forced entry and larceny was re-

ported at The Christmas Tree on Main Street where a person broke a window to enter the store where hand and power tools were stolen and damage to a window valued at \$200 was sustained.

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Town Board redoes Town Place CUD procedure; Planning Board weighs in ... again

By Stuart Ferguson and Kim Lewicki

The mole hill that has turned into a mountain continues to grow.

All but 15 minutes of last Thursday's one hour and 45-minute Town Board meeting revolved around the Town Place Condominiums on Hickory Street and the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).

Right off the bat the Town Board unanimously approved the proposed Planning Board recommendation from its February 5 meeting which was to amend the UDO to eliminate the Planning Board's authority to make administrative changes to conditions placed on a Conditional Use District (CUD).

Now, under the amendments, the Planning Board can only make recommendations regarding all issues that come before it.

Town Attorney Bill Coward said amending the ordinance removes the Planning Board's ability to make administrative changes to CUDs – the definition of which wasn't defined in the ordinance and so was left to conjecture.

Not only did the allowance prove to be unworkable, said Coward, under the state's General Statutes only an elected board can make zoning changes. The Planning Board is appointed by the Town Board.

"This is a way to make the UDO conform with state laws. From now on, the Town Board will be considering all amendments to Conditional Use Zoning districts," he said.

What followed was a long and often confused and confusing discussion regarding a motion for a public hearing during the March 21 Town Board meeting about changing the conditions of the Town Place CUD.

According to the agenda memo from Highlands Town Manager Bob Frye, merely the scheduling of the public hearing was needed, but during the following hour-long discussion, questions were raised.

Would it also address the controversial changes approved earlier?

•See CUD page 2

HCP's 'Social Security' runs through the weekend



Wife Trudy (played by Marsha Shmalo) listens as husband (Stuart Armor) argues with his brother-in-law (Lance Trudel) about living arrangement for their mother-in-law in the Highlands Cashiers Players production of the comedy "Social Security," on stage at the Performing Arts Center in Highlands, Friday through Sunday, March 1-3. Tickets and information: 526-8084.

BOE to fund completion of Highlands batting cage

Thanks to the urging of Highlands' representatives at the county level, Highlands' recreation options are being brought up to par with Franklin's.

Macon County Commissioner Jim Tate has gotten his board to agree to help finance improvements/changes to the pool at the Highlands Rec Park, particularly

since the county is in the midst of renovating the pool complex at the county recreation facility in Franklin for \$338,500.

At its January meeting, Macon County School Board member Stephanie McCall expressed the need for a batting cage for the Highlands School baseball team. The

•See CAGE page 14

BOE refines policies

By Davin Eldridge

The Macon County Board of Education got down to business on Monday by furthering its efforts in establishing a few new policies and reviewing others.

Social Networking

The board began in earnest by accepting the first reading for its social networking policy. With the growing popularity of social media and networking, board members are seeking to maintain the safety of students by laying out general guidelines on use of such internet sites. The draft policy cites incidents of cyber-bullying, threats of violence and sexual predation as factors in its rationale.

"School systems nationwide have witnessed a sharp increase in disciplinary actions based on information posted by students on websites or transmitted through other electronic media," reads the draft, which goes on to explain that any information posted on social networking sites is subject to the public domain.

The policy, which aims to avoid specificity to certain internet sites, prohibits access to networking sites from school computer networks unless it is demonstrated that such use is "directly related to classroom instruction or Board of Education approved extracurricular activities such as athletics or student organizations.

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• LETTERS •

Highlanders don't need to swim anyway

Dear Editor,

After reading the lead story in your paper last week on plans for the new pool at the Highlands Recreation Department, I appreciate of the mercurial decision by our town leaders not to build a covered pool. That recreation survey a few years ago where a covered pool was rated a top priority must have been just an aberration not to be seriously considered.

Reading further I discovered that if the current pool wasn't connected to one of those big, bad grants from Washington, our town decision makers may have decided just to demolish the dilapidated existing pool. I guess the rationale would have been Highlanders don't really need to swim.

And, think about the savings and the number of people the town wouldn't have to deal with during the summer! Now wouldn't that be efficient government at its best? Ah, what could have been!

Patrick Taylor
Highlands

LTLT applauds renewal of 'conservation tax incentive'

Dear Editor

Congress' "fiscal cliff" deal renewed a tax incentive for private landowners—especially working family farmers and ranchers—who protect their land with a voluntary conservation agreement. The incentive, which had expired at the end of 2011, helped LTLT (Land Trust for the Little Tennessee) work with private landowners in Western North Carolina to conserve 2,900 acres of productive agricultural lands and natural areas between 2006 and 2011. This included preserving important cultural lands such as the historic Camp Sequoyah Canoe Camp on Nantahala Lake (see attached).

Conservation-minded landowners now have until December 31, 2013 to take advantage of a significant tax deduction for donating a voluntary conservation agreement to permanently protect important natural or historic resources on their land.

When landowners donate a conservation easement to LTLT, they maintain ownership and management of their land and can sell or pass the land on to their heirs. While each conservation easement is specific to the land and landowner, most easements allow for limited future development.

The enhanced incentive applies to a landowner's federal income tax. It:

- Raises the deduction a donor can take for donating a voluntary conservation agreement from 30% of their income in any year to 50%;
- Allows farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their income; and
- Increases the number of years over which a donor can take deductions from 6 to 16 years.

According to the Land Trust Alliance, the national organization that provides a voice for land trusts in Washington, DC,

last year's bills to make this incentive permanent had 311 House and 28 Senate co-sponsors from 47 states, including majorities of Democrats and Republicans in the House. This legislation is further supported by more than 65 national agricultural, sportsmen and conservation organizations.

LTLT is a community-based nonprofit dedicated to conserving the waters, forests, farms, and heritage of the Upper Little Tennessee and Hiwassee River Valleys, including the Tuckasegee, Valley and Cheoah Rivers. LTLT works with private landowners, public agencies, and others in the six far-western counties of North Carolina and northern Rabun County, Georgia. Since 1999, LTLT has been a key agent for the protection of more than 21,000 acres, including riverfront lands along 35 miles of the free-flowing Little Tennessee River.

Paul Carlson
LTLT Executive Director.

LETTERS-TO-THE EDITOR-POLICY

We reserve the right to reject or edit submissions.

NO ANONYMOUS LETTERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Views expressed are not necessarily those of Highlands Newspaper.
Please EMAIL letters by Sunday at 5 p.m. There is a 500-word limit without prior approval.

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... CUD continued from page 1

er by the Planning Board — those changes which brought about a lawsuit (dropped for now) by Town Place neighbor Stephen Ham?

An appeal based on those actions was taken to the Town Board in November which upheld the Planning Board's ruling 3 to 2 with Commissioners Amy Patterson and John Dotson voting nay.

Now Attorney Coward says Mesa Highlands Investors, LLC — the current owners of Town Place Condominiums hasn't gotten the proper consideration by the town — namely because the process was done incorrectly since the powers of the Planning Board as outlined in the UDO were not in line with the state's General Statutes. And so it needs to be done again.

"We've amended our ordinance so the issue will go back to the Planning Board for a recommendation and then there will be a public hearing March 21 after which the Town Board will make its decision," he said. (The Planning Board addressed the issue at its Monday, Feb. 25 meeting. See below.)

Coward asked commissioners to outline what it wants the Planning Board to consider concerning the requested changes to conditions set upon the property back in 2006.

"The proposal that comes out of meeting here tonight is what the Planning Board will consider — as it is required to do, and that will be the proposal that is discussed at the public hearing. It is usual legislative practice to have a hearing on the original proposal — or as close as you can get to it," he said.

Mayor David Wilkes said whether the Planning Board approves it again or not, it will come back to the Town Board.

"We're sending back pretty much what they looked at in October, because it has to go back to the Planning Board to resolve the legislative issues. When it comes back to March 21 Town Board meeting, we're going to have to decide on conditional uses then. It doesn't make complete sense, but it's a legislative necessity," he said.

Commissioner Patterson said it was her understanding that the Planning Board needs Town Board input before it is sent back to them because as of now, what's being sent back is just what the developer wants. "That's just one side of the equation. So we need to send to the Planning Board what we think will make sense," she said.

She also said she had a problem with
• See CUD page 3

... CUD continued from page 2

the changes to the CUD site plan because a single-family home was replaced with a multi-family home and moved closer to the property line of a neighbor who objected to the development in the first place.

"I think we have to balance both sides of the equation. So it's not just what the developer wants, it's what the neighborhood wants. That's what zoning does. Zoning is about relationships," she said. "The original CUD allowed for the R2 feel of neighborhood but allowed the developer to put in multi-family units on the plot. In the original plan, we weren't giving the developer all the value of property — the neighbors have some rights, too. That's why the old house is a single condo unit, different from all the others."

Mesa developer Zach Schaumburg said they took into account some of those concerns. "There is no argument that the new building is closer to the property line but there's still a significant 40-foot buffer that's quite lush and substantial. We'd be willing to enhance the buffer more. In terms of design, we tried to do a façade that in terms of streetscape read like single-family home and thought that was a way to try to accomplish — not everything — but close to having the feel of single-family house."

Citizen Alice Nelson said "With all due respect, all those arguments seem specious. You want to throw that poor guy a carrot; you want to build a bigger building closer to his property line, so you all generously said 'we will enhance the buffer,' like a consolation prize."

Schaumburg said the current product on the property isn't marketable.

"It doesn't work. There is marketability to consider. People won't buy units when you're living on top of someone else. We're just trying to minimize someone else's mistake."

But Commissioner John Dotson disagreed in particular and in principle saying Highlands has proven products where people live on top of each other.

"I agree with your concept; I think the new design is far superior to the existing structures that are there, but that's simply the judgmental fallacy of the previous developer; that's not a problem of the Town of Highlands."

Finally, commissioners voted unanimously to send the issue back to the Planning Board with the minutes of Thursday's Town Board meeting and the stipulation that whatever was decided, the Town Place project must be completed within three years of the issuance of the Special Use Permit (SUP), which itself must be obtained within one year from the March 21 meet-

ing. Commissioner Eric Pierson was absent. **Planning Board recommends CUD changes**

Following a long discussion Monday night, the Planning Board voted 4-1 to recommend changes to the original CUD for the Town Place Condominium project with several stipulations. Member Alan Marsh voted nay.

First, all references referring to the project as "Schmitt Drawings" in the amended CUD verbiage were to be replaced with the proper name of the project and date; the buffer along the back side of the plot that borders the residential properties will be augmented to match the Type 2 buffer outlined in the UDO so it is opaque and it must be completed within a year of the issuance of the SUP; once the SUP is in hand, which must be obtained within a year of the amended CUD plan being accepted, the developer has three years to complete the project; the second floor balconies will be removed with outdoor living spaces moved to the lower level (as requested by neighbor Steve Ham) and therefore the rendering to be considered by the Town Board at the public hearing on March 21 will match the changes to the façades — including adjusting the roof line and placement of the garages to accommodate balcony changes; and all colors and materials will be in accordance with those allowed in the UDO section 6.5.

Steve Ham and his wife have had meetings with the developer which has agreed to make the requested changes to the balconies and subsequently the façade, so people on upper story balconies can't look down onto their property.

Planning Board members asked if Ham was satisfied with the changes.

"I can't say that I support the project, even relative to the CUD that was passed in 2006 because when I bought my property it was single-family and the town changed it to multi-family with conditions that included a single-family structure next to my property. The administrative change changed that and that's when I had my hissy fit because that was more than a simple change, and that's why I did what I did. My objection to the procedural part is elected officials are the ones who need to look residents in the face and make the changes. We have now rectified that," he said. "I feel that this project needs to go ahead and be completed and I think it will be better than what is there now. I can look the current developers in the eye and we may not agree on everything but we can work toward some progress. I'm not opposing it but I'm not supporting it either."

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Don't come down here without your 'Tommy Gun!'

One would think by now the lines would have decreased a little. They haven't. This week I zipped over to Gander Mountain, an awesome sporting goods emporium just a short distance from our Florida home, to pick up a few necessities, like the new easy release 30-round smooth loading M-16 magazine and a couple hundred .223 caliber bullets for my sexy M-16 semi-automatic rifle. Gander's was packed with customers, most of whom were buying guns and bullets.

And if you're interested, call me and I'll give you a fun tip on how to convert your 30-round magazine to a 60-round output by using a small amount of duct tape. And if you're a real fanatic and don't mind using a little more duct tape, I'll show you how to convert to a 120-round deal we call the "windmill." All the drug lords are doing it. It's

designed for folks who want to blow away a whole lot of people at one session. The M-16 fully automatic rifle, illegal for citizens to possess, was my love machine when I commanded the SWAT teams and I'm proud to announce I scored "expert" at the range many times. The weapon's accuracy is phenomenal.

I always buy supplies in January to insure I'll have enough to get me through the year. While they still had plenty .223 steel-jacketed rounds for my love machine, I was bummed out to learn the .357 steel-jacketed hollow points are on back order and have been sold out since Christmas. I'll just have to get by with the few hundred I have left. Bullet manufacturers report they're in the weeds since the Connecticut massacre and can't keep up with the demand. Apparently, the "New America" is arming itself to the hilt. People are getting rain checks for these beauties. Rain checks for bullets? Whodathunkit?

I love the .357 hollow-point bullet 'cause it punches a small hole in a criminal's chest or forehead and then exits the size of a tennis ball. One can easily spot a criminal killed by a hollow-point as there's always body matter splashed all over the place.

I always shop at Gander's for my protection needs because the place is soooo clean and safe. And I have no idea why there's a full-sized Cessna 150 aircraft hanging from the ceiling except maybe it's full of security equipment. There are metal detectors, hidden cameras and armed security gunmen at each entrance and exit to make sure some whacko doesn't come in, mow down all the employees and steal their stuff. Too bad our schools aren't as secure....but who cares about them?

Gander's is so safe, I sometimes go there just to wander around and fondle every single item in the store, then have lunch in their killer restaurant. (Oops, maybe awesome would be a better word?) Gander's hamburgers are



Fred Wooldridge

"to die for."

Also, the place offers an incredible selection of switchblade knives. I don't do knives 'cause I don't like getting that close to people trying to kill me. Besides, I have the switchblade of all switchblade knives. I'm the proud owner of a nine-inch relic I took from a guy hell-bent on sticking it in my chest at the Fontainebleau Hotel back in the '70s. It's the only killing memento I have left from my cop days.

Also, Gander's offers the latest state-of-the-art night vision equipment. The set I own is so comfortable, I could sleep while wearing it. Warning: For reasons I can't go into, do not have sex while wearing your night vision goggles.

When you wear your night vision goggles to bed, all you have to do is wake up after hearing a noise, open your eyes and look around your dark green bedroom while reaching for your weapon of choice. Just make sure you don't shoot your li'l missus making a potty run. Oh, and they're dishwasher safe. No, no, no, not your li'l missus, the night vision equipment.

People who wait in the long checkout lines at Gander's are always respectful of one another. Even though you're pretty sure no one is armed, it's not smart to aggravate anyone since you don't know what's squirreled away in their car just outside the front door. I just smile and say "sir" or "ma'am" to everyone. Bowling is also good. I learned that tip from our beloved president.

Oh, and by the way, I'll remind you I'm not standing in line in Crawford or Dallas, TX, or in some redneck neighborhood. Our Gander Mountain is in the heart of the very sophisticated, wine sipping, bleeding heart, very liberal and wealthy Democratic bastion called Palm Beach County where election workers report they'll soon have

• See WOOLDRIDGE page 14

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Highlanders celebrate second straight conference title. Photo by Lisa Osteen

Highlanders fall to Robbinsville in NCHSAA Playoffs

By Ryan Potts

The Highlands Highlanders closed out a surprising season with a home loss to Robbinsville in the first round of the NCHSAA playoffs. The Black Knights used a 8-0 run in the first quarter fueled by three technical fouls called on the Highlanders to take a lead that they would not relinquish in a 70-61 victory.

The entire game was marred by controversial officiating, but none more controversial than a first quarter that saw a Highlander player and coach ejected and Robbinsville reap the benefits. Robbinsville took a 21-13 lead on the strength of 12 first quarter free throws and the Highlanders would get no closer than 6 points along the way.

Senior Taylor Osteen closed out a fantastic Highlands career with 20 points, Davis Moore added 15 and Brent Amundrud recorded a double-double with 10 points and 10 rebounds. Tyler Munger added 12 for the Highlanders. The Highlanders finish their season as Little Smoky Mountain Conference Champions for the second straight year, with an overall record of 15-11.

Lady Highlanders advance to second round of NCHSAA Playoffs

The Highlands Lady Highlanders upset the Queens Grant Stallions on Monday night to advance to the second round of the NCHSAA playoffs for the third straight season. Thanks to a quirk in the seeding process that the NCHSAA uses, the Lady Highlanders hosted Queens Grant despite being a lower seed because Queens Grant was an independent qualifier. Queens Grant is a Charter School located in Charlotte and coached by former WNBA Player and NC State star Rhonda Mapp.

The Lady Highlanders quickly took advantage of their home-court advantage, jumping out to a 9-2 lead as the Lady Stallions had trouble adjusting to the altitude and the mountain officiating. Ultimately the Highlanders maintained control despite a pushback from Queens Grant. The Lady Stallions managed to settle in and cut the Lady Highlander lead to a mere two points at halftime.

In the second half, the Lady Highland-

• See HS SPORTS page 11

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Home values nationwide began 2013 on a positive note, much the same way they ended 2012, and rose for the 15th consecutive month in January, according to the January Zillow Real Estate Market Reports.

On an annual basis, all 30 of the nation's largest metro areas tracked by Zillow experienced year-over-year gains in January. The winter months are typically when things cool off in the housing market, not only in Highlands but in many parts of the country. The last three months have seen a level of activity in Highlands that we have not seen during the winter months for many years. We expect that demand will continue to be high throughout 2013, which should help home values in Highlands rebound.

Many potential buyers are waiting until they can be completely sure the real estate market has fully recovered before making the move to purchase a home. Here are four reasons why waiting might not make sense any longer:

1.) Home Prices Are on the Rise A nationwide panel of more than 100 professional forecasters expects home prices to rise 3.1 percent in 2013 after finishing 2012 up more than 4.6 percent, reflecting growing optimism in the housing market, according to the December 2012 Zillow® Home Price Expectations Survey. The survey of 105 economists, real estate experts and investment and market strategists was sponsored by leading real estate information marketplace Zillow, Inc. It is based on the projected path of the S&P/Case-Shiller® U.S. National Home Price Index during the coming five years. "An organic recovery in the housing market really took hold in the latter half of 2012, and this improvement is echoed in some of the most optimistic price projections we've seen in years from this group," said Zillow Chief Economist Dr. Stan Humphries. "Record levels of affordability and an improving overall economic picture have really helped buoy the market and have us well positioned for continued growth, albeit slightly slower, in 2013 and beyond."

2.) Mortgage Interest Rates Are Expected to Increase. The Mortgage Bankers Asso-



Judy Michaud
Meadows Mountain Realty

ciation has predicted that, after reaching historic lows in 2012, mortgage rates will slowly climb in 2013 to 4.4%. We have already seen this slow rise as rates have already increased by 2/10 of a point (3.32 to 3.53) in the last two months.

3.) New Mortgage Regulations Will Be Announced Later This Year. Six regulators, including the Department of Housing and Urban Development,

the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency and the Securities and Exchange Commission, are currently drafting the new Qualified Residential Mortgage (QRM) rule. They will decide on two major requirements for buyers looking to qualify for a mortgage: minimum down payment and minimum FICO score. Many experts believe the new rules will be more stringent than current requirements.

4.) Timelines Will Be Shorter The dramatic increase in transactions caused many challenges to the process of buying or selling a home in 2012. As real estate professionals helping buyers and sellers, we waited for inspections, dealt with last minute appraisals and prayed that the bank didn't ask for 'just one more piece of paper' before issuing a commitment on the mortgage. There are fewer transactions this time of year which means that timetables on each component of the home buying process will be friendlier for those involved in transactions over the next 90 days.

• If you are looking to buy a home or land in the Highlands area, let the professionals at Meadows Mountain Realty show you the way. We know that real estate has changed, and we have changed to meet the challenge, always putting our "Clients First." Meadows Mountain Realty was again the number one firm in Highlands with 18 brokers who average over 15 years of experience in real estate. We have two locations to serve you better - in the Old Edwards Complex at 41 Church Street and across from Highlands Falls Country Club on the Cashiers Road. Call us today at 828-526-1717 or 828-526-4101. www.meadowsmtnrealty.com

• COACH'S CORNER •

On Parenting



Ryan Potts
tryanpotts@hotmail.com

This weekend, I had the pleasure of experiencing my first AAU tournament as a parent, and I came to the realization that I may not be cut out for that particular scene. You read stories all the time about overzealous coaches and parents (such as the current headline on my Yahoo news homepage "peewee hockey coach trips kid in handshake line, receives 15 days in jail.") but I had never before seen it in the flesh.

Meegan and I walked into this middle school gym in Kingsport, TN and immediately I noticed two things. First, it costs more to attend an AAU tournament as a spectator than it does to attend a High School Basketball game. It also costs more to attend an AAU tournament than it does to sit in the nosebleed section and watch the Charlotte Bobcats. While I would agree that watching the Charlotte Bobcats is not exactly my idea of quality basketball, at least the guys are professional.

The second thing I noticed was the sea of parents living vicariously through their children. Mothers wearing shirts with their kid's picture on it, fathers dressing in full-on team gear, parent coaches attempting to dress like coaches and attempting to act like Bob Knight or John Calipari if there were a contest to determine which parent I had the most contempt for, it would have been a 57-way tie.

Now don't get me wrong, I love my kid and think he's going to be a pretty good player one day, but I don't think it will benefit him to revolve my whole world around his athletic accomplishments at the age of 9.

Additionally, I found many of the kids who played in the AAU tournament to be sweet kids who played hard and wanted to please their coaches and parents. While it would be easy to blame AAU sports for many of the problems found in athletics today, I

wouldn't go that far. What I would say is that the amount of attention and pressure put upon these kids at this age can be both helpful and

... BURGLARIES continued from page 1

At 8:40 p.m., a burglary with forced entry and larceny from buildings was reported at Taylor Barnes Spa and Salon on NC 106 where someone broke into the business and stole \$72 in cash, a \$35 check, and to enter damaged windows and doors estimated at \$750.

At 8:57 p.m., a larceny from a building and burglary and a non-forced entry was reported at Highlands Decorating Center on NC 106 (underneath Taylor Barnes Spa and Salon) where someone broke a window to enter the building where \$582 in cash was stolen and \$3,400 in structural damage was sustained.

According to some victims, fingerprints were lifted from the crime scenes but Police Chief Bill Harrell would not verify that information.

"All of the tools and resources for a thorough investigation were executed but I can't elaborate on what techniques were successful at this time as a statement would be premature," he said.

Chief Harrell said the break-ins may be related but would say nothing more because the cases are under investigation.

harmful to their long term development.

On the one hand, with the traveling that these teams do, most kids are not fazed by any situation or any crowd when they reach the college level, which is one reason why freshmen have the impact that they do today.

On the other hand, these kids have been pampered and told how wonderful they are for years, and they are often coached by a parent or someone who is not a professional, which then prevents them from having the respect needed for the coaches at the higher levels.

Needless to say, my AAU experience was much worse as a parent than it was as a coach. Perhaps I will come around one day to the whole deal, but at this point, I would rather have a root canal than attend another.



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— Kim Lewicki

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• HIGHLANDS AREA UPCOMING EVENTS •

Ongoing

• Registration is now open for the 2013 summer Nature Day Camps at the Highlands Nature Center. Five different camps are being offered: "WOW! – a World of Wonder" (ages 4-6), "Amazing Animals" (ages 7-10), "NatureWorks" (ages 8-11), "Mountain Explorers" (ages 10-13), and "Junior Ecologists" (ages 11-14). Most camps are offered more than once during the summer, and sessions run from Tuesday to Friday each week. For complete schedules, costs, and other information, please call 828-526-2623 or visit the summer camps webpage at www.highlandsbiological.org.

Mon., Wed., Fri.

• Heart Healthy Exercise Class at the Rec Park. 8:30-9:30 a.m. \$20/month.

• Zumba at the Rec Park, 9:05a-10a. \$5 per class. First class free.

First Monday

• Highlands-Cashiers Hospital Auxiliary meets the first Monday of the month at 10 am. Everyone is welcome. For more information call Volunteer Services at 526-1376

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.

3rd Wednesday

• Movies at the Hudson Library. Recently released movies at 2 p.m. Free including popcorn. Bring your own soft drinks. 828-526-3031 for movie information.

1st Wednesday

• Movies at the Hudson Library. Children/Family movies at 3:30 p.m. Free including popcorn. Bring your own soft drinks. 828-526-3031 for movie information. **Wednesdays & Fridays**

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

Thursdays

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

• The Highlands Writers Group meets at 1 p.m. at the Hudson Library. Call Anne Doggett at 526 8009.

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

Second Thursdays

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

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 Diane 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 invite **Friday, March 1**

• Angel Medical Center Blood Drive (120 River-view Street; Franklin, NC) 8am – 12:30 pm and 12:30 pm – 5: pm Please call Barbara Hall at (828) 369-4166 to schedule your appointment.

Friday, March 1

• The High Mountain Squares will dance this Friday night at the Macon County Community Building on Route 441 South from 6:30-9p. Herb Franklin from Ladson, SC will be the caller. We dance Western Style Square Dancing, main/stream and plus levels. There will be a Plus

Workshop from 6:30-7p. Everyone is welcome. For information call 828-349-0905, or www.highmountainsquares.org

Fri. - Sun., March 1-3

• Highlands-Cashiers Players Thursday through Friday through Sunday, March 1-3. Weekday and Saturday performances start at 7:30 p.m., Sunday matinees, at 2:30 p.m. Call the HCP box office, 526-8084 for tickets.

Tues., March 5

• First meeting of the season for the MC Men's Softball League at the Community Building in Franklin across from Whistle Stop Mall at 7 p.m. Anyone wanted to put a team in the league needs to attend or call Danny at 828-371-1280.

• At Highlands Dialogue, Tuesday 10-11:30a at Hudson Library, Resolved: The US Must Outlaw the Death Penalty. Based on: "Who Would Jesus Execute?" by Richard Viguerie. Sojourners: January 2013. Hand-out available at the Library (also e-mailed). Coordinator: John Gaston.

Thurs. March 7

• Taize at HUMC at 5:30p.

• Highlands' NC Democratic Party annual precinct organizational meeting is a 6 p.m. at the Highlands Civic Center. It's free and open to any registered Democrat residing in the precinct. Officers and delegates to the Macon County Convention on April 13 at 10a in the Macon County Courthouse. For more information contact Karen Hawk at hwnkncrw@earthlink.net or Faviola Olvera at 828-200-9717.

Saturday, March 9

• Macon County Beekeeping School. Learn the basics – hive construction, honeybee biology, colony management, handling bees and harvesting honey crops. Also pest management. To register contact Janet Hill at 828-369-9819 or janet28734@gmail.com

• The Highlands Chamber of Commerce Annual Chili Cook-off from 6:30-9:30pm at the Highlands Community Building. Music by Caribbean Cowboys. For you chili-lovers who would rather eat than cook, tickets will be sold at the door, \$20pp (doors open at 6:30pm) and children 12 and under get in FREE. Soft drinks, beer and wine will be served. If you would like to enter the event as a competitor and fire up your best chili recipe, bake your best batch of cornbread ever or perfect the family's secret salsa recipe, contact Jennifer Smathers by phone at (828) 526-2112, email her at visitor@highlandschamber.org.

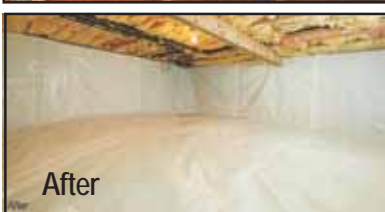
Tues., March 12

• Macon County Beekeeping School. Learn the basics – hive construction, honeybee biology, colony management, handling bees and harvesting honey crops. Also pest management. To register contact Janet Hill at 828-369-9819 or janet28734@gmail.com

Thursday, March 14

• Franklin Community Blood Drive to be held at First Baptist Church of Franklin (69 Lotla Street; Franklin, NC) 12:30 pm – 5 pm. Please contact First Baptist Church of Franklin at (828) 369-9559 for more information or to schedule an appointment.

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'Social Security' continues through Sunday, March 3

It's a hit as it was on Broadway the 1980s -- That's "Social Security," the Highlands Cashiers Players' production which continues at the Performing Arts Center in Highlands, Friday, March 1 through Sunday, March 3.

This amusing, laugh-out-loud comedy opened to a standing ovation last week at PAC and is recommended as great antidote to the winter blues.

Two sisters (played by Jennifer Royce and Marsha Shmallo) and their husbands,



Mama Sophie Greengrass (played by Nancy Gaddy) refuses her daughter's request (Jennifer Royce) to get dressed for a dinner party in the Highlands Cashiers Players production of the comedy "Social Security," on stage at the Performing Arts Center in Highlands, Friday through Sunday, March 1-3. Tickets and information: 526-8084.

(played by Lance Trudel and Stuart Armor) are faced with the problem of providing a suitable home for their eccentric and difficult widowed mother, Sophie Greengrass (played by Nancy Gaddy), who surprises them all when she meets Maurice Koenig, an acclaimed 98-year-old artist (played by Dean Zuch). Call the Players' box office for tickets, 526-9094. Friday and Saturday performances start at 7:30, the Sunday matinee, at 2:30.

The policy also prohibits interaction between students and teachers via networking sites unless it pertains to classroom activities.

Students and school employees are encouraged to "think" before they post,

especially if such posts are sexual, non-professional or contain harassment of any kind. Failure by a school employee to follow such guidelines could result in contract non-renewal or even termination, according to the draft.



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"We have discussed this and volleyed it back and forth and we now have something more workable," said Dan Moore, director of personnel for Macon County Public Schools. Moore stressed the importance of establishing the difference between personal and public use of social sites in the policy, as school activities can thrive with the help of social networking.

The policy will be further examined at next month's board meeting.

•See BOE page 11



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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

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Our Lady of the Mountains
Catholic Church



I was food shopping recently and I overheard a little girl say to her mother "But you promised!" I imagine that we had all used these words as children on our parents. When we were little, we trusted in our parents without question. Our lives depended on our parents, who took care of all of our needs. Our parent's response to our cries assured us that they were reliable people concerned with our needs.

This is the attitude we need to have towards God. But as adults, this can be difficult. As we grew up, we found that the unquestioning trust of a little child was not as easy. We learned that our parents are fallible. We had classmates who cheated on tests, a teacher who played favorites, TV ads that promised much more than they could ever deliver. We learned to approach with caution and scrutiny the promises of politicians or sales people. So we seek guarantees, some evidence to back up what the person is saying with what the reality will be.

But we can not allow this attitude to spill over into our relationship with God. We realize that our trust in Jesus is very different. Jesus does care for us like a loving parent, with great tenderness. The only guarantee that we get from Jesus is that he becomes one of us without losing his power as God.

His glory as God is demonstrated in the Gospel of Luke, 9:28-36. Jesus' closest friends, Peter, James and John, get a sign - a glimpse of Jesus in all his glory as he invites them up the mountain where he becomes dazzling white. The voice of God telling them to listen to Jesus. After an experience like that, it is easy to see how they could put their trust in him.

We, too, listen to Jesus and trust him. We remember times when he has touched our lives with his grace and love. He offers us a life which makes sense - true freedom in leaving sin behind and following God's commands. Our faith demands that this trust be unconditional. It is believing in things we have not yet seen. Sickness and sorrow may be in our future, but people who trust in Jesus can be instruments of his comfort and healing. Many families and nations are divided - Jesus calls us to bring his peace. Evil is still present in our world - in Jesus' name we must forgive one another conscious of the forgiveness he has given us. All of this is possible because of Jesus' power as God.

Wherever evil is conquered by resisting sin, the power of Jesus is felt. When we look for paths to reconciliation where there is hatred and hurt, Jesus is there. Our hope must be in the transformation God is working in us now - to picture ourselves as we will be, with glorified bodies free of sickness and disease. True to his promise, we will find salvation.

John 3:16

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

Proverbs 3:5

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Mon.: Bible Study & Supper at homes - 6 p.m.
Wed.: Men's Bible Study - 8:30 a.m., First Baptist Church
Thurs.: Women's Prayer Group - 10 a.m., Whiteside Presbyterian
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Wednesdays - 7 p.m.
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10:45am: Worship Service
Wed.: 5pm Dinner (\$7 adult, \$2 child), 6pm CBC University

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II, (sanctuary), 10:30 am
Thursdays: Holy Eucharist, (chapel), 10 am
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Dr. Mark Ford, Pastor • 526-4153
Sun.: Worship 10:45 a.m.; School - 9:30 a.m.
Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m., Prayer Meeting - 6:15 p.m.,
Choir - 5 p.m.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Dr. Lee Bowman, Pastor • 526-3175
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Labor Day; School - 9:30
Mondays: 8 a.m. - Men's Prayer Group & Breakfast
Wednesdays - Choir - 7

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Sundays: Worship - 11

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670 N. 4th Street (next to the Highlands Civic Center)
Sunday: Morning Worship 10:45 a., Evening Worship, 6:30 p.
Wednesday: Prayer Service, 6:30 p.

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Pastor Paul Christy 526-3376
Sun: School 9:45a.; Worship 9:09 & 10:50.; Youth Group 5:30 p.
Wed: Supper; 6; 7:15 - children, youth, & adults studies; 6:15 -
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Thurs: 12:30 - Women's Bible Study (nursery)

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Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg. - 7 p.m.

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p.m.

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

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Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study - 7

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WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

... BOE continued from page 9

Community Corrections-School Partnership

Citing a recent incident of a juvenile probation officer entering a public school and taking a student into custody during the middle of class, Town Attorney John F. Henning Jr. issued a memorandum between Macon County Public Schools and the North Carolina Department of Public Safety.

"It was a bad enough situation that it caused a sort of knee-jerk reaction. We have a new statute that says that any probation visits on a school campus have to happen in a very prescribed manner." The agreement establishes the protocol between schools and probation officers involving probate students, Henning explained.

According to the memorandum, state probation officers may only visit students during school hours on school property with prior authorization by school administrators. Such a policy sets in motion a level of discretion in how a probation officer handles a student during school hours, Henning explained, as to not disrupt school instruction or public embarrassment of students.

The memorandum, an agreement between the county

and the state's department of public safety, establishes that the school must provide a private area to meet with students under probation, allows for communication between instructors and the officer, contact the officer in the event of excessive unexcused absences and holds probate students to standards of productivity (e.g. maintain good grades, come to school on time, follow all school rules, etc.).

The agreement passed unanimously.

Medication

The board unanimously approved the second reading of an amendment that allows itself and its schools to refuse administration of medications to students under certain conditions — if it is the opinion of the superintendent and nursing personnel that there is a "substantial risk of harm to the student or others if medication is administered by school personnel."

While the board officially discourages the use and administration of medication at school for students, it recognizes that under certain circumstances, it is necessary for students to take medication during school hours or extra-curricular activities. The policy establishes that items such as non-

FDA approved treatments or medications, "off-label" prescriptions and treatments that cannot safely be delegated to non-licensed personnel were cited as grounds for medication administration refusal.

Macon County school administrators will continue strict adherence to the matter, according to Dr. Jim Duncan, Macon County Interim Superintendent. "If you bring me something in writing stating that [a student] needs to take this at, say 11:30, with instructions on the label of what is to be administered, then it is OK. Sometimes you just need to remind people that's the way you do business," he said, stressing that public schools are not a dispensary of medication.

New Energy Savings

The board issued awards to county schools for the lowest utility-use increases for the month.

"No school was less than they were the month before," said Duncan, who gave awards to the schools which had the smallest utility increases. South Macon Elementary was awarded first place for the smallest increase of .6 percent, while Franklin High School took second (5.5 percent) and Cartoogechaye Elementary (5.6 percent) took third.

... HS SPORTS continued from page 5

ers took advantage of their depth and wore down the Queens Grant players, getting easy baskets and getting to the line with ease. The problems for Queens Grant snowballed, as Mapp was ejected for arguing and the Lady Highlanders were solid from the line, running away for a 58-45 victory.

Emily Gabbard led the Highlanders with 22 points, going 14-18 from the FT line. Rebekah Parks pulled down 16 rebounds for the Highlanders in the victory. The Lady Highlanders will travel to Hiwassee Dam for the second round of the NCHSAA tournament.

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... CAGE continued from page 1

board discussed shifting funds slotted for Cartoogechaye Elementary School recreation to Highlands School and at the February meeting Monday, Feb. 25, that became a reality.

After a polling prior to the meeting \$8,600 was allotted to complete the project which has been funded thus far by the private/municipal sector in Highlands.

The \$8,600 will be used to complete the cage including a pad, lighting and a roof for \$5,500; a storage building estimated to cost \$1,500 since the batting cage is being constructed on the town's ballfield and not at the school; and \$1,600 will buy nets, screens and miscellaneous equipment.

In 2011 Jerry Moore, owner of Kilwin's, was appointed head baseball coach at Highlands School and the team has been going strong ever since. There had been sporadic participation over the previous seven years.

To create the proper facility for playing high school baseball, Moore embarked on a project to build a covered batting cage. Since then parents and nonprofits have been footing the bill.

John Lupoli of Lupoli Construction, made a substantial donation of lumber and roof trusses valued at approximately \$10,000. Volunteer labor came from baseball parents, players, and community members, including Seth Schmitt, Noel Buras, Stuart Beavers and others.

After running low on funds to com-

plete the batting cage in January of this year, Rotary President and Town Board Commissioner Brian Stiehler raised \$1,000 through private donations and the Rotary Club of Highlands. The town allocated \$1,000 from its parks and recreation budget..

Moore has also contributed approximately \$750 of his own money throughout the project.

"Highlands School baseball program is probably the only program in the Smoky Mountain Conference that didn't have a batting cage," said Moore. "A batting cage is an essential component to any successful program, as it allows players to work on the field while others are improving their hitting skills in the batting cage."

Funds allocated by the school board will now complete the year-long project.

"This will go a long way to getting us where we need to be," said Moore. "We are slowly but surely getting our facilities improved and I think in large part to the current efforts of Jim Tate and Stephanie McCall. It is critical to the success of Highlands School to keep the best students and student athletes in Highlands and this can only be done with excellence in education, sports and other extra-curricular activities," he said.

Moore said the building of the batting cage at the Highlands town ballfield is a perfect example of the community working hand-in-hand with the school board to improve the opportunities for Highlands' young people.

The batting cage will also be available to the little league teams and the general public during baseball season.

– Kim Lewicki

... WOOLDRIDGE from page 4

the final results of our last presidential election. Gee, I wonder who'll win.

Based on the long lines, the bad news is Democrats are just as frightened of what might occur in the "New America" as Republicans, except Republicans are also lamenting over the loss of our "Old America." And why is Homeland Security buying every bullet they can get their hands on? What's that about?

And finally, I may be an old, crotchety, American-born, white male and slower than I once was, but I still have some of the skills taught to me as a SWAT commander. I figure that gives me an edge over the rest if the shootin' starts and the "New America" begins to collapse. I mean....how much strength does it take to pull a trigger?

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands PD log entries from Feb. 6. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor, or public officials have been used.

Feb. 6

- At 3 p.m., officers were called about damage to landscaped property on N. 5th Street.

Feb. 19

- At 10 a.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on Big Bear Pen Road.
- During the week 5 citations were issued.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries from Feb. 13.

Feb. 13

- At 11:10 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to assist EMS at a residence on Cook Road.

Feb. 16

- At 8:24 p.m., the dept. was called to Cypress Lane about a chimney fire. It was out when they arrived.

Feb. 17

- At 4:24 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to assist EMS at a residence on Sassafras Gap Road.

Feb. 18

- At 4:09 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm on Country Club Drive. It was due to a broken water line.

Feb. 19

- At 7:27 a.m., the dept. responded to a minor vehicle accident on US 64 west.
- At 9:16 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to assist EMS at a residence on Buck Creek Road.
- At 12:10 p.m., the dept. was called to the hospital ER to assist EMS with a patient there.

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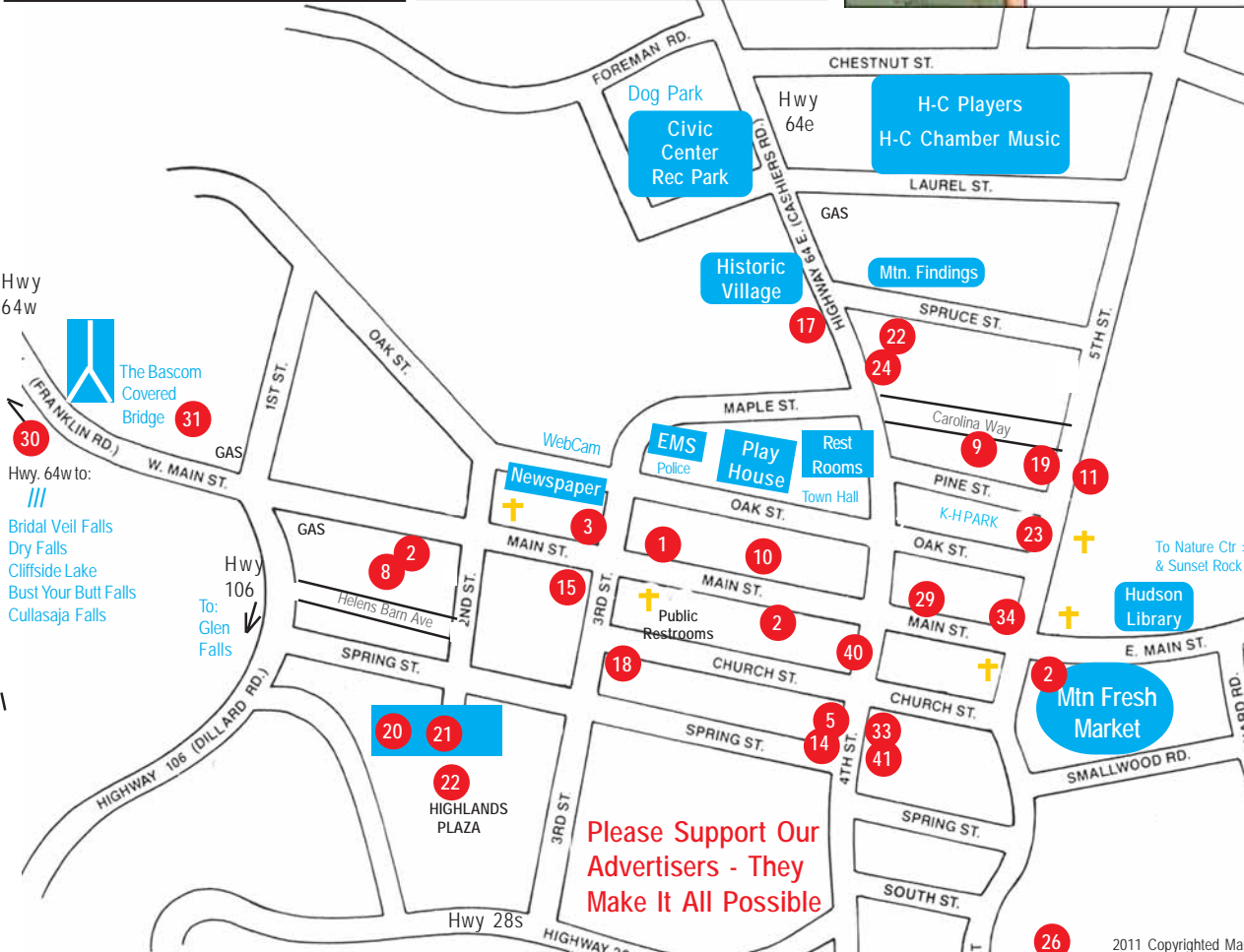
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