

# Highlands Newspaper

FREE every Thursday

Volume 11, Number 3

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Thursday, Jan. 17, 2013

## Old Edwards upcoming projects approved by all

Old Edwards Hospitality Group is on the move – acquiring properties and making improvements and additions to existing properties.

They were the subject of December's Town Board meeting, a

special-called Zoning Board meeting December 19, the Appearance Commission meeting Jan 7 and the Zoning Board meeting on Jan. 9.

In each case OEI's plans were unanimously approved.

On Monday, Jan. 7, the Appearance Commission considered two OEI applications – one to build a porte-cochere on The Lodge property on Spring Street and one to enclose porch areas at the spa on Main Street.

The porte-cochere is to be built over the existing drop-off and walkway areas leading to the entrance of The Lodge to protect patrons during inclement weather.

Because is represents new

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## NC flu at highest level in a decade

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services encourages all North Carolinians to take time to get their annual flu vaccination. According to State Health Director Laura Gerald, flu activity across the state is at the highest levels recorded in the past decade. Twelve flu-related deaths already have been reported in the state.

"It is very unusual for us to see this many deaths so early in the flu season," Dr. Gerald said. "This year's vaccine is well-matched to the strains of flu we are seeing in North Carolina so we strongly recommend that anyone over six months old be vaccinated."

Flu outbreaks have been reported in schools and long-term care facilities across the state. Although everyone is at risk, flu can be especially dangerous for people at high risk of complications, including pregnant women, people with chronic diseases, very young children and the elderly.

**HCP's Eckerd Living Center**

Due to increase activity in

influenza in the residents of Eckerd Living Center (ELC), Highlands-Cashiers Hospital is asking that family and friends limit visitations to the Hospital, Living Center and the Emergency Department. In particular, HCH is requesting that visits be limited to only terminally ill patients and residents for a period of 10 days or upon further notice.

HCH has implemented this precaution for the protection of patients, residents, family members, and the public in general.

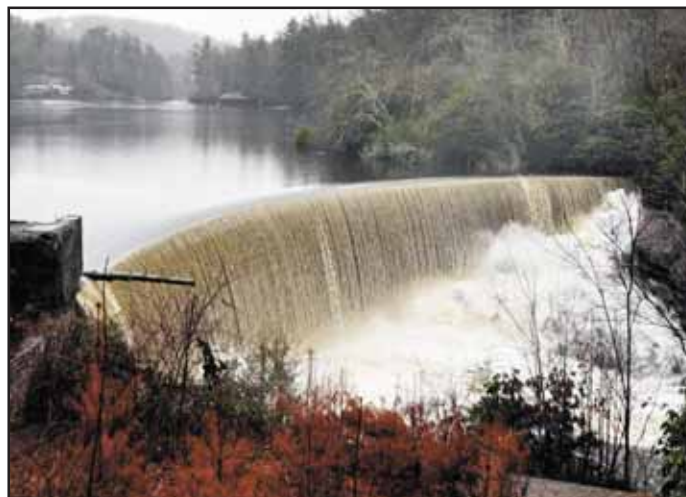
The decision is based on recommendations from ELC Medical Director Dr. John Baumrucker and Infection Control Specialist, Cindy Barloga, RN.

"In spite of excellent 'flu shot' vaccination rates for both residents and staff, the influenza vaccination has not prevented all cases but will likely lessen the duration and the severity of the illness," said Barloga. "The patients and residents are our first priority and their health and safety is paramount."

Limiting visitations is a standard precaution taken during flu season when flu activity reaches a certain level. In addition, influenza can be controlled by frequent hand washing and the use of proper respiratory etiquette. For more information about visitations, please call (828) 526-1200.

• See FLU page 10

## No snow but lots of rain



More than 7 inches of rain has fallen since Sunday so area rivers are raging and Lake Sequoyah is full. On Wednesday Superintendent Jim Duncan delayed school countywide for two hours due to water over several roads and the early morning rain. He said the delay promoted safety for student drivers, bus drivers, and bus riders. See weather videos at <http://www.highlandsinfo.com/WeatherArchives.htm>

Photo by Jim Lewicki

## Town holds firm on utility policy

A couple of weeks before Christmas, area pastors met to discuss the consequences of how the town's increase in utility rates has affected citizens; particularly the termination of services for many. They formally requested the Town Board to consider reinstating the town's unofficial policy of accepting what citizens can pay during the winter months.

However Town Manager Bob Frye said he has not been instructed to deviate from the official policy.

"We are proceeding with our collection policy. The November disconnect list had 208 delinquent customers, the December list which we are wrapping up now has 48 delinquent customers on it. At this point there has been no discussion concerning allowing people to slide until spring," he said.

Frye said as of Jan. 1 there are 17 remaining on the disconnect list which went into effect Tuesday, Dec. 4 and they are all second homes owners.

– Kim Lewicki

## County postpones 'park' purchase

At the Monday, Jan. 14 continued Macon County Commission meeting, commissioners deliberated long and hard on whether to proceed with the purchase of the Parker Meadows property – a purchase the board voted unanimously to make on Nov. 13, 2012.

The county had 60 days – until Jan. 14 – to do due diligence prior to closing which was supposed to happen Jan. 29.

Since public money is being used, the county must complete an archeological study and commissioners voted to get those results before committing – in case the study unearths something that could increase overall development costs, making the deal fiscally unattractive.

The board OK'd no more than \$42,000 to conduct the study which, weather permitting, could take six weeks. The seller modified the agreement to purchase and to extend the due diligence time to April 15 with closing April 30.

The 48-acre site on Old Patton Road – the former Parker Meadows Farm – is available in a short sale for \$550,000 – a price

• See PARK page 5

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# • THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

## • LETTERS •

### We need our magistrate back!

Dear Editor,  
I am responding to the article in the Jan. 10 edition entitled "Judge Downs to fight for local magistrate."

If Judge Downs of the Superior of NC, and Chief Harrell of Highlands Police Department, aren't able to persuade the elected officials of the State of North Carolina to re-instate our part-time Magistrate's position into the state's budget, then the Town of Highlands and Macon County will end up footing the bill for the loss.

At the very least, with no local Magistrate to process late night charges and arrests, Highlands Police Department will have to pick up the tab by adding extra officers to the night shift payroll.

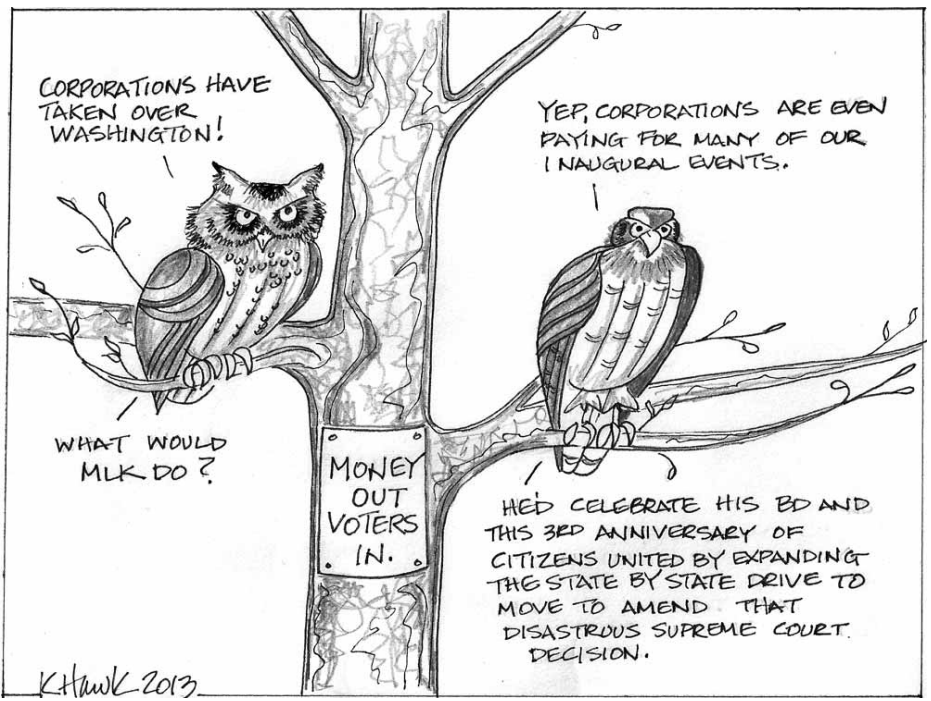
With citizen Patrick Taylor's steadfast service in that position, the town has been able to get by with only two HPD officers on night duty, with an extra officer or two on holidays and busy weekends. If a single officer has to take at least two to three hours, more in some cases, to transport a suspect to Franklin for processing and appearance before a magistrate for all charges, then Highlands will be left vulnerable and unprotected for those hours unless it puts more officers on the night shift payroll.

It should also be noted that Macon County typically only provides one sheriff's deputy for night duty for all the areas surrounding Highlands and beyond. That makes a total of only three law enforcement officers for our area on a typical night shift.

Not only did the part-time magistrate's position give us an officer of the court on standby duty on a 24/7 basis, it was also cost effective. It is short-sighted of the state and will cost substantially more if this position is not situated and staffed in Highlands. Whatever the State of NC erroneously perceives that it may save by this action, the town and county will pay for in spades. This process will also be cumbersome and costly to deliver efficacious law enforcement

There are other advantages for Highlands, and its visitors, to having one of our own local citizens in this important judi-

## • HAWK'S EYE VIEW •



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cial position for review of HDP cases. The public's rights and interests are best protected and served by having this important state function conveniently located in town and by having the position filled by a citizen of Highlands. The efficacy of local law enforcement will be diminished if all cases require processing in Franklin, especially minor cases.

Local citizens should contact our state representatives and other officials, in an effort to have the position of a local magistrate reinstated. Having the state provide this necessary judicial function in a geographically practical manner is its obligation, and allows us as a town and county to deliver more efficient police protection.

Our citizens should speak up, and special note taken of those representatives who do not support our part time magistrate's position. Having Patrick Taylor in this position locally, has been a vital link in maintaining the peace and tranquility we have enjoyed and that we deserve and will continue to demand.

If this short-sighted approach to the State of North Carolina's obligations to its citizens isn't overturned through the much appreciated efforts of Judge Downs and Chief Harrell, then it will prove to be another, exercise of poor economic foresight, as well as, poor administration of state law enforcement policy in our area.

The people of Highlands have reason to ask: Why has there not been more action from local elected officials in an effort to preserve this important judicial function and position of Magistrate? Why has this been allowed to happen without more official resistance from our Town Hall dignitaries?

Charlie Dasher  
Highlands

### Satire is fiction

Dear Editor,  
I can't believe I'm doing this again. I'm in my eighth year writing satire for this newspaper but I guess some will never catch on. But I refuse to give up on those who are dense and lack any sense of humor. Nor will I publicly be called out as a racist when I'm not.

Satire is fiction. We take real occurring events and build folly or distortions around it, poking fun. Because the topics are usually sensitive, some readers laugh

• See LETTERS page 6



## • OBITUARIES •

### Violet Morris Betz



Tom will be remembered for his love of his family, generosity of spirit, commitment to his friends, and his quickness of wit. Tom retired early from sales and along with Brenda started Highlands House of Coffee in Highlands, N.C., a choice which allowed him the beloved freedom to spend cool summers in Highlands and warm winters in Naples, Florida the last 26 years of his life.

Tom served this community through First United Methodist Church, the Lions Club and volunteered with Give Kids the World, the Salvation Army and Habitat for Humanity. He served in the U.S. Navy on the USS Coral Sea.

Tom's memorial service will be held Thursday January 17 at 10:30 in the chapel at the First United Methodist Church, Gainesville, Georgia. All are welcome.

The family requests that those wishing to make donations in Tom's name make them to the Child Care Center operated by the Salvation Army of Naples, Florida ([http://www.uss.salvationarmy.org/uss/www\\_uss\\_naples.nsf](http://www.uss.salvationarmy.org/uss/www_uss_naples.nsf)).

### Leesa Lynn Crisp



Leesa Lynn Crisp, age 55, of Highlands, NC died Saturday, January 12, 2013. Born in Marion Co., IN, she was the daughter of James N. Scott and Mary Louise Knight Scott of New Castle, IN.

She is survived by her husband of 25 years, Charles "Chuck" Crisp of Highlands, NC; two daughters, Michele Martin and husband Josh, of Woodstock, GA., Krista Chapman and husband Justin of Ball Ground, GA; one son David Crisp and wife Alyson of Asheville, NC; four grandchildren, Rachel and Zachary Chapman and

Karson and Emory Martin; one sister, Karin Potts, of Highlands, NC, and two brothers, Lance Scott, of Fort White, FL and Michael Scott of Micanopy FL.

Leesa was a homemaker who loved cooking and singing. She was a loving wife, mother, sister and grandmother.

A memorial service was held Tuesday, January 15, 2013 in the Chapel of Bryant-Grant Funeral Home in Highlands with Rev. Matt Shuler officiating. Burial will be in the Highlands Memorial Park at a later date.

Memorial donations may be made to the ASPCA, PO Box 96929, Washington, DC 20090.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements. Online condolences may be made at [www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com](http://www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com).

### ... PROJECTS continued from page 1

construction, according to the town's Unified Development Ordinance, a special use permit (SUP) is needed from the Zoning Board (which heard the case Wednesday, Jan. 9) preceded by a recommendation from the Appearance Commission.

The porte-cochere doesn't affect the property's built upon both because it's covering an area that is already impervious and also because the built upon is 70% so there is plenty of leeway.

•See PROJECTS page 11



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### Thomas Walter Cox

Thomas Walter Cox born July 10, 1930 in Gainesville, Georgia died January 12, 2013 in Naples, Florida. Tom is survived by his loving wife Brenda Margaret Harrison Cox, sons Stan Cox, Greg Cox and Dave Cox. Those who know Tom and Brenda will understand a friend's observation that their 60 years of marriage was one of the world's great love stories.

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## • THE VIEW FROM HERE •

### It's likely Congress will cave when it comes to gun control

It has been one month since a shooting rampage took the lives of 20 children and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, CT. Demands for meaningful gun control are waning. Politicians are sniffing the air and deciding they have more to lose by supporting legislation than by opposing it.

Gun lobbyists are breathing easier, sensing the will to impose restrictions on the sale of assault weapons and high capacity magazines has lost momentum. Democrats remember

all too well the political cost of passing similar legislation in 1994, the year Republicans, not coincidentally, took control of Congress without firing a shot. Pro-gun voters are far more likely to punish members for passing legislation than gun control advocates are to punish them for inaction. The passion of gun owners, combined with the resources of the NRA, is a powerful weapon against Congressmen whose principal interest is reelection.

As each day passes, the visceral horror associated with the mass murder abates just a little. The window for reform is narrow and will soon slam shut. The question remains, what is the proper response to tragedies like this? Mass murder has occurred before and will happen again.

We can all agree on two things. First, such carnage would be impossible without rapid-fire assault weapons with high-capacity magazines. Second, these crimes are not



**Dr. Henry Salzarulo**

**Feedback is encouraged.  
email:**

**hsalzarulo@aol.com**

carried out by the millions of law abiding American gun owners, but by mentally ill people. Advocates of gun control ask, it seems rhetorically, why a hunter needs an assault rifle with a 30-round mag to shoot a deer. The answer is not that he is a poor shot. The answer is that he has no need of such a weapon for hunting. Citizens buy assault weapons for protection; the more fire power, the better. There are millions of Americans who believe their government is incapable of protecting them and millions more who see

their government as the enemy. Even if we ignore the zombie threat, that leaves a lot of people who believe they need to protect themselves.

There has been some thought to trying to prevent guns from getting into the hands of lunatics, while preserving the right to gun ownership for the rest of us (them). The legislation which eventually passes will probably ban high capacity magazines, but permit the sale of assault weapons. There will be an emphasis on expanded background checks and evaluation of mental health. I have no idea how a gun dealer will determine the mental health of a client. Most of the dealers are at least a little crazy themselves. Medical confidentiality would almost certainly preclude access to a buyer's psychiatric history, and it's probable the mass murderers have no previous documented psychiatric history anyway.

Our mental health system in this coun-

try is in a shambles. Some believe the Sandy Hook shootings were triggered by the shooter's Mother's attempt to have him involuntarily committed, but how is a gun dealer to determine the mental health of a customer? Guns are sold at gun shops, Walmart, online, and at gun shows. Congress may approve feel-good legislation expanding both background checks and access to psychiatric services, but that's a net with gaping holes.

I met my first survivalist in 1973. I thought he was crazy as a coot. He made his six-year-old twins train with 22-caliber rifles with life ammunition in preparation for what he called the "imminent end." It turns out it wasn't so imminent. The movement has grown. Once in a while one of them snaps. Or it may be a kid who's tired of being bullied, or who hates his folks, or who didn't make the football team. The only possible choke point is access to weapons, not psychiatric histories and background checks. Is it appropriate to hinder Americans access to military-style weapons to prevent a looney from obtaining one? Congress will decide, with considerable help from the NRA.

### ... PARK continued from page 1

Commissioners Ron Haven and Paul Higdon think is too high. The value of the property is \$750,000 – \$800,000 is owed on the property.

Macon County is eligible for a 50% match grant from the NC Parks and Recreation Fund (PARTF), \$500,000 per granting cycle, up to \$1 million in total. One cycle ends Jan. 31 and the next begins Aug. 1.

To get the full \$500,000 this go around, the county agreed to present basic facts and assurances that it will spend at least \$500,000.

Consequently, for the purposes of the grant, the county is agreeing to spend \$617,576 which when added to the PARTF funds of \$500,000, will purchase the property, fund

• See PARK page 11

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## • HS SPORTS •

### Lady Highlanders drop two

By Ryan Potts

The Highlands Lady Highlanders dropped a pair of tough games to Robbinsville and Hiwassee Dam this week.

Thursday evening, the Lady Highlanders hosted the Lady Knights from Robbinsville in a non-conference matchup. Highlands came out ready to play, and only trailed 13-9 at the end of the first quarter. A low scoring second quarter for both teams sent Highlands to the half only trailing by 6, and the Highlanders were able to cut the lead to two at one point in the third quarter.

Unfortunately, the Lady Highlanders ran out of gas down the stretch, as Robbinsville outscored them 22-10 in the fourth quarter to pull away with a 57-34 victory. Emily Shuler led Highlands with 9 points.

On Monday, the Highlanders hosted Hiwassee Dam in an important conference matchup, but the experience and depth of the Lady Eagles proved to be too much for a young Highlands squad. Hiwassee Dam used a 12-0 second quarter run to build a large lead and never look back in a 67-29 victory. Ann Marie Crowe, Kirstyn Lamb and Whitney Billingsley all scored 8 for the Lady Highlanders.

### Highlanders upset Robbinsville, crush Hiwassee Dam

The Robbinsville Black Knights rolled into Highlands on Thursday night ranked 9th in the state, but were upset by a gritty Highlanders squad.

Highlanders opened the game on a 10-0 run, knocking the Knights back on their heels in the opening minutes. Even after Robbinsville settled in, Highlands expanded the lead to as many as 18, and led by 16 at the half. In the second half, Robbinsville pushed back hard, getting as close as three in the final minute. However, the

Highlanders were 8-8 from the FT line in the final minutes, including 6-6 from sophomore guard Kenan Lewis to secure a 58-51 victory. Lewis led Highlands with a career high 16, and Tyler Munger added 11.

On Monday, Highlands looked for a little payback against a Hiwassee Dam after blowing a 13 point second half lead over at Hiwassee Dam earlier this season. After a tight first quarter that saw Highlands take a one point lead, the Highlanders used an 18-4 run to open up an 18 point halftime lead.

This time would be different for Highlands, as they pushed out the lead further by the start of the fourth quarter to ensure that there would be no Eagle comeback in a 64-35 victory. Tyler Munger had 17 points for Highlands, Taylor Osteen had 14 points and 4 steals and Brent Amundrud added 11. The win puts the Highlanders in first place in the Little Smoky Mountain Conference, and sets up a showdown with Blue Ridge at the end of the season to clinch a second straight LSMC Championship.

## ... LETTERS from page 2


while others grow angry, depending on their point of view. That's the very nature of satire. Don't my critics ever watch satirist perform on TV? Do they think the events portrayed are true?

When more intellectual readers see my column titled "Laughing at Life," they know the events depicted never occurred. The few times I write serious stuff, the column is titled "Looking at Life." Again, satire is fiction and sometimes brings out the crazies. I usually brush away the hate mail and continue to live the wonderful life I'm experiencing. But when self-righteous Highlands' white men, maybe even anti-Semitic white men, put pen to paper and call me a racist, I must respond.

If you're a critic, see if you can grasp this. Before my retirement, I was a white male policeman for a sizable South Florida police department for more than 28 years. In the beginning, the power structure was predominately Jewish and I'll get into that in just a moment.

I started at the bottom walking a beat, studied hard and obeyed my orders. I diligently

• See LETTERS page 9



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## Highlands 2012 Real Estate Market Report

Many of you have asked about the real estate market on the Highlands plateau. To give you a historical perspective, we put together the stats comparing 2012 for Highlands over the last five years:

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Number of sales	158	88	92	68	102	121
Days on market	234	253	300	307	364	434
Med. Price	\$557,500	\$492,750	\$576,153	\$550,000	\$440,000	\$425,000
Avg. price	\$824,500	\$687,636	\$707,995	\$674,287	\$572,129	\$565,586
Fore./SS	0	0	10	8	22	29



**Lynn Kimball**  
Meadows Mountain Realty

We had a three year run from 2005 through 2007 when real estate in Highlands, like much of the country, saw competing offers and significant increases in property values. Looking at 2007 compared to 2012, the median price is down 22% and the average price is down 30% - real declines in values. The list to sale ratio for the median pricing is 86%. The median numbers are the more important ones to consider because the average number is very influenced by the numbers on the extreme. The median number is less influenced. For instance, there are 5 people whose ages are 1, 2, 3, 4 and 55. If we want a single number that represented this group's age ...the average would be 13. Well, 13 is a terrible representation of the set. On the other hand, the median of this group is 3, which is a more accurate representation of the entire group's age. In real estate, the same principle applies.

Another distressing number is the increasing days on the market for a sold home – an increase of 96% since 2007. Even more alarming is the average days on market for unsold homes currently on the market - 583 days with some homes on the market over 2000 days.

This past week there was a lot of hype in the media regarding the news of home prices up across the country. Only five states reported no increase and of those, only one feeds our market – Alabama. We were behind the curve for the real estate bust – ours came in 2010 instead of 2008, and we believe that we will be a bit behind the curve in our recovery of home prices as well. If Congress and our President keep us from going over the fiscal cliff, we should see buyers coming out of the woodwork, as there seems to be a fair amount of pent-up demand, particularly from the upper end buyers.

Following are the 2012 for residential closed sales compared to 2011, plus an accounting of unsold homes on the market.

There were 25 land sales with a median sale price of \$51,000, 10 of which were distressed. There are currently 224 home sites on the market with an average of 1232 days on market.

There were 17 condo sales with a median sale price of \$480,000, 6 of which were distressed. There are currently 69 condos on the market with an average of 738 days on market.

It is important for you to have all of the facts which affect your property even if it is not currently for sale. Whether it is your portfolio of stocks or your investment in real estate, we believe that with good information, you can make good decisions for your important assets.

MSN Money and Case-Shiller reports the following Returns on Investment from January 2000 to December 2012:

DOW: +19.1%. S & P: +1.5% NASDAQ: -23.6% REAL ESTATE: +46.2%

The most important factor in selling a property today is to price it "right" in the market over the short term (6 months to a year), which means pricing competitively with other unsold properties. The most important factor in buying a property today is to look over the long term before prices and interest rates increase.

You are invited to visit our user friendly websites at [www.MeadowsMtnRealty.com](http://www.MeadowsMtnRealty.com) and [www.SignatureProperties-NC.com](http://www.SignatureProperties-NC.com). Meadows Mountain Realty has two locations, on Church Street in the Old Edwards Inn complex and on the Cashiers Road across from Highlands Falls Country Club. Lynn Kimball may be reached at 828-421-8193 or by email at [Lynn@MeadowsMtnRealty.com](mailto:Lynn@MeadowsMtnRealty.com).

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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

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Our nation is under going a philosophical change. When this nation was founded the philosophical line of thought was grounded in the Judeo-Christian tradition. One of the great principles of that tradition, which shaped much of how our nation was built, was liberty of conscience.

Many of the Reformers gave their very lives for this principle. They took a stand against Pope and King that the church nor the government had a right to bind their conscience. They held to what the Scripture taught in Acts 5:29, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

The Reformation was not a war with the church and the Pope, as much as, it was a struggle to be witnesses of God for Jesus Christ. Yes, they fought against the Pope and the authority of Rome, and many in the political world liked the idea of weakening the power of Rome. But when they saw that it was not just Rome that the Reformers refused to follow but also the governments that wanted to control religion, they became very strong in their persecution of the Reformers. These Reformers believed that God alone is the Lord of the church and of men's consciences. They declared very boldly that they were "bought with a price" and they would not be "servants of men" (I Corinthians 7:23).

I believe that in our day, we face a problem brought on by this idea of liberty of conscience. The principle of separation of church and state comes out of this doctrine. The idea our forefathers had was that the State should have no power to bind the consciences of men. Thomas Jefferson explained that there was a porous wall between state and church. It allowed the exchange of ideas but prohibited the State's control of the church. The forefathers believed that a man's conscience should be free from the state, when it came to what they believed concerning God.

Today, we see the State trying to control the minds of men with economic slavery through welfare, through the total control of education and now through control of health care. They are trying to remove the church from the public arena altogether. This was never the intention of our forefathers. That is why Jefferson said the wall was porous, the forefathers believed they needed the influence of the religious dialogue on the hearts of men. The church was free to exercise influence on the government through its preaching and teaching but the government was not free to inhibit the church. What is happening today is that this whole idea is being turned upside down and with that comes the binding of men's consciences. Therefore, it is very impor-

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 13

John 3:16

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

Proverbs 3:5

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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.

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Dr. Lee Bo wman, Pastor • 526-3175  
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Worship, 6:30 p.m.  
Wednesday: Prayer Service, 6:30 p.m.

**HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

Pastor Paul Christy 526-3376  
Sun: School 9:45a.; Worship 9:09 & 10:50.; Youth Group 5:30 p.  
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## ... LETTERS continued from page 6

worked my way up through the ranks. During those years, I worked for both male and female bosses who were from every ethnic group. I know I don't have to remind my common sense readers how multi-cultured the Miami area has always been. In time, I watched the city's power structure slowly change from Jewish to Hispanic. It didn't matter.

When I finally did retire, I was Chief of the Criminal Investigations Division and the department's SWAT Commander. I was also the go-to guy the Chief of Police relied on for delicate matters, some of them racial. One cannot achieve what I accomplished by being a racist.

The li'l missus and I are truly blessed because, during the winter months, we spend our time in a gated community in North Palm Beach that is home to many ethnics. They were here when we moved in but who cares?

I love the Jewish people. I owe part of my success as a policeman to them so I guess my critics can add that to their hate

list. More than just a few of our Jewish friends have told us Highlands is anti-Semitic. I know that because I make it a point to ask them. Some report that while it's subtle, it's definitely there. That's a black eye no one in Highlands wants to address. And that's fine with me as long as I'm not called out as a racist.

The piece I wrote for the Dec 27/Jan 3 newspaper was satire. I was poking fun of the fact that Highlands is incapable of attracting people of color to its town, therefore it would be a great place for an angry old grumpy white man like me to hang out. The spoof was and still is that everyone in Highlands is hanging out with their own kind. Look around, Highlanders. Where are the people of color? I can't believe I'm having to explain this.

How white Highlanders can sit in their ivory white towers and call me or anyone a racist when they live in an anti-Semitic town with zero black residents goes beyond pompous. I won't call them ignorant

•See LETTERS page 11

## On Carolina Way ....

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It's that time of the year, when everyone seems to be either making New Year's resolutions, or already breaking them. Many rush to join a gym, full of great plans and promises, only to rejoin the ranks of the couch potato brigade a few months later. Statistics show the dropout rate at between 60-80%. Discouraging, isn't it? If physical activity is high on the list, the #1 New Year's Resolution is still to lose weight. Most of us could stand to lose a few – or more than a few – pounds, and few times of the year bring this home to us like the end of the old year. After all, we've just come off more than a month's worth of pumpkin pie and stuffing, followed by boozy punch, Christmas cookies and all manner of goodies that have your arteries screaming "enough already!"

I looked at an old photo album last week with dismay. There I was, tall and leggy, and while I've never been skinny, there certainly was much less of me than now. My mother was mostly responsible for the good health of the whole household. Her idea of dessert was an apple. We did not drink soda, nor did we snack between meals. We rode our bicycles to school. Unless the weather was bad, my father rounded us up for a weekly hike in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Snow meant

sledding, followed by mugs of hot chocolate or cider, and doing jigsaw puzzles in front of a roaring fire. For most of my childhood, the only TV in the house was in my parents' bedroom. As we were not allowed to eat anywhere but the kitchen and dining room, we didn't develop the habit of eating while watching television.

The only time we were allowed to eat in our rooms was when we were sick. I seldom remember my brother ever being ill, except for the three Christmases in a row when we both came down with the mumps, measles, and chicken pox. On the one occasion Dr. Anderson paid my mother a house call, as I stood in the hallway sobbing, convinced she was dying. Years later, my father went to GE with walking double pneumonia. No, the "sickie" in the family was almost always me, plagued with enlarged tonsils and chronic sore throats. Illness meant being moved to my parents' room, for the special privilege of watching TV during the day – something normally forbidden in our household. I was propped up with pillows, lost in what seemed to be the biggest bed in the world. It almost compensated for being alone for six hours, since neither parent ever took time off to stay with me. In those days – the late 50s and early 60s – women in the workforce had to fight to stay in their jobs, and taking time off for their families was discouraged. I watched the clock, waiting for 3:30pm, when my mother would come home from teaching. She usually treated me to all my favorites - Campbell's cream of mushroom soup, Canada Dry ginger ale, and Sealtest chocolate ice cream.

I don't object to resolutions on princi-

## • JUST HERS •

### Irresolute?



**Michelle Mead-Armor**  
michiemead@aol.com

ple, but rather dislike the timing. If a great idea comes to you on April 17th that might change your life for the better, why wait until next January 1st to implement it? For those of us who live in areas where January usually means bad weather, why compound the winter glum with unreasonable demands, like starvation and Spandex? Perhaps the negative attitude of "giving something up" should be replaced with a more positive one of taking on something fun. Surely change is more palatable when it doesn't feel like a "time out" in the corner imposed by a stern and humorless teacher or parent.

This year, I listened to many of my friends complaining about the holiday weight gains they were expecting. Already, their Thanksgiving plans were tainted by the pie they would avoid, the gravy they wouldn't slather on the dressing they wouldn't take. Christmas was even worse! No matter how much people would try to force them to eat or drink, they would be strong! They would prevail. If someone held a cookie swap, they would say they were going to Asheville for an appointment with a specialist. Office parties? Charity events? They would limit themselves to seltzer water and celery. Taking the "Christ" out of Christmas? They'd already taken out the "Merry." Every time I ran into my friends at the post office or the library, they would mournfully wail about how much fun they weren't having. "Oh, come off it!" I chided. "Live a little! You can always get serious about your weight in January. What will you do when you're dying for eggnog, and it's July?" But, no, they were adamant, they could not be deterred.

I, on the other hand, decided to take a different approach. Not limiting what I ate; I just tried to eat smaller bits of everything. After all, life is not a "one size fits all" deal, so why should food? Coming from a background of cognac, croissants, and camembert, however, I've always thought that diet foods – string cheese and rice cakes – were as exciting as eating grout or industrial waste. Surprisingly, giving up on this dieting obsession meant I rarely thought about food at all. I stopped dreaming about my next meal, and the one after that. Visions of sugar plums

did not dance in my head, nor did visions of cheesecake, fois gras, and marzipan stollen.

The holidays over, I reconnected with my friends who had spent their time with family and friends. Their days had been hectic, full of presents and visiting. Mine had been spent mostly hunkering down with Orion, listening to Christmas music, watching TV, and chilling out. And their diets, so dearly fought for? Most admitted gaining between 5 and 10 pounds. And me? A whole pound and a half. Resolutions? I don't really go in for them, but if I did, I know what would be at the top of my list. To be kinder to folks, myself included. Life is short, and as the saying goes, uncertain. R.I.P.? It may mean "Rest in Peace" to you, but for me, it's "Relax, it's pizza!"

### ... FLU from page 1

It takes about two weeks for immunity to develop after vaccination but it is the safest and most effective way to protect against flu. Dr. Gerald recommends that people: stay home when they are sick; wash their hands regularly with soap and water; cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and then discard the tissue promptly.

State-supplied flu vaccine is available at no charge from most local health departments and many providers. Becky Barr of the Macon County Public Health Dept. said the health department is currently out of flu vaccine, but may receive more from the state.

Call 349-2081 to inquire as to the current availability of flu shots at MCPH.

Barr said weekly statewide reports indicate that flu is still high, but lower than the previous week.

"Flu is not a reportable disease in North Carolina so there are no county level numbers available; although some local hospitals, private clinics, and long-term care facilities may keep their own numbers of patients presenting with influenza like illness," she said.

#### Statewide Updates:

- The geographic spread of flu was widespread for week ending Jan. 5, 2013.

- Of the 28 samples submitted to the State Laboratory of Public Health (SLPH) for viral testing during the past week, 15 tested positive for influenza. Thirteen tested positive for influenza A/H3 and two tested positive for influenza A/H1 (pdm)

- Hospital-based Public Health Epidemiologists (PHEs) reported 282 positive influenza results for week ending Jan. 5: 222 influenza A (not sub-typed), 32 influenza A/H3; 10 influenza B and 18 influenza A/H1 (pdm).

– Kim Lewicki



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## ... PROJECTS continued from page 3

After a short discussion regarding height and construction materials, the commission voted unanimously to approve the plan.

Jimmy Teem, the county fire inspector, requested that the structure be tall enough to handle emergency vehicles, including fire trucks, so the porte-cochere is 13 feet, 4 inches high.

On Wednesday, the Zoning Board made quick work of the request, too, OKing the project and issuing the required SUP.

Monday night the Appearance Commission also considered a change to OEI's spa facility on the main campus at Main and South 4th Street. No other

board was required to visit the plans.

OEI is enclosing the two terraces – the upper terrace adjacent to the spa and the terrace next to the spa relaxation room so both can be used during the late fall and winter months which will make the area usable all year long.

The panels used to enclose the upper terrace will match the panels below and will be finished to match.

The second enclosure will be on the terrace next to the spa relaxation room. The space is partially covered with a timber-frame roof. The new design will extend the roof over the balance of the terrace and door panels will be

installed into the side walls. The panels stacking system design will enable them to be opened when weather permits.

OEI CEO Richard Delaney said both these projects will enable the inn to make use of all its square footage all year long.

Though the subject was initially contentious both at the November Planning Board meeting and the regular December Town Board meeting, at the Dec. 19 special-called Zoning Board meeting, at which Commissioners Gary Drake, Brian Stiehler and John Dotson were present, the board unanimously approved OEI's special use permit to develop the property at 594 Main Street into a small event venue.

Commissioner Dotson regularly attends zoning and planning board meetings but rarely participates. At the Dec. 19 Zoning Board meeting, however, Commissioner Drake testified that given the success of OEI's Piedmont House on South Street, the venue planned on Main Street will likely be successful, too, which will be a "win-win" for everyone.

The following conditions were attached to the SUP:

A 40-ft. buffer be maintained around the perimeter of the property with the buffer on Horse Cove Road maintained at all times; no amplified sound; a maximum of four musical instruments; a maximum of 40 people attending per event; events cease at 10 p.m.; a maximum of 12 people staying overnight on the property; that the tree-top walkway be removed; that no additional buildings, except the 30'x30' pavilion be built; and that the property maintain its residential feel and character.

– **Kim Lewicki**

## ... PARK from 5

two adult ball fields, a multi-purpose field (soccer), paved greenway, playground, picnic pavilion, and supporting infrastructure, a total of \$1.117,576 – for starters.

"This gives the county as much flexibility as possible with the understanding that this is not a limitation, just that this is a minimum the county will do," said County Attorney Chester Jones.

The master plan for the property provided by Mike Lavoy with Alliance Consulting Engineers comes in at \$4.9 million but includes everything in the initial grant plus two 4-field cloverleaves, a splash pad, golf course, four fitness stations, and much more.

"This is a two-fold vision," said Chairman Kevin Corbin, "A, we need more recreation space for citizens and B, is the economic development aspect so travel league tournaments can come to Macon County rather than go elsewhere."

The county has the highest

• See PARK page 13

## ... LETTERS continued from page 9

because I don't know them.

Highlands is so bigoted it even harassed and drove away the only Mexican female police-woman it had. Unable to continue to work or live in Highlands, she eventually turned in her resignation. What shame! Since childhood, all that lady ever wanted to be was a Highlands' police officer. But she had three strikes against her. She was female and Hispanic. The third strike was the ugly rumors started by white male officers about her and our current chief of police. What trash! And I'm being called a racist? This takes hypocrisy to a new level!

I am sorry to publicly air Highlands' dirty laundry but this is a fight I did not want or invite. I know that the bigotry only involves a handful of white males with poison pens but I cannot stand by and allow them to publicly call me a racist. I must stand and fight back and that's what I'm doing.

Fred Wooldridge  
Highlands and No.  
Palm Beach.

## Hawk cartoon was misleading

Dear Editor,

I have pondered Karen Hawk's cartoon in the Dec. 27/Jan. 3 issue.

I'm not sure what she had

in mind, except to help those who might have their power shut off.

However, it did not paint a true picture of the generous people who live here.

They are constantly helping the needy with food, funds, services, and support the arts. In fact, we recently raised a lot of money for a family in Scaly who lost their home to fire (thanks to some bright young people in the high school for a very successful spaghetti supper).

All spring and summer there are fundraisers. We can't let one cartoon mislead the image of the people supporting all the programs we support with love.

I'm proud to live here and feel we are a caring community and need to celebrate once in a while, with Thanksgiving.

Marian Beccue  
Scaly Mountain

## Take out the pork

Dear Editor,

In response to Jim Hartje's letter-to-the-editor in the Jan. 10 edition entitled "Remember this..." Did Mr. Hartje really want our Congressman Mark Meadows to vote for all of the \$23.8 billions dollars of pork included in the Federal Flood Insurance program for the victims of Hurricane Sandy?

Take out the pork - you'll get the vote.

Is he really OK with spending that much money for all of the unrelated pork? If so, why?

Thanks Congressman Meadows for watching my money.

Patce Thornton  
Highlands, NC

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Highlands PD log entries from Dec. 31. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor, or public officials have been used.

Dec. 31

At 10:17 p.m., officers responded to a call about a missing person from a residence on Lucerne Dr. A 62-year-old man had fallen and cut his head and had wandered off.

Jan. 1

At 11:54 p.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident at Spring and S. 4th Street.

Jan. 3

At 1:54 a.m., officers were called about an 81-year-old man who was missing person.

• During the week 6 citations were issued.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries from Jan. 9.

Jan. 9

At 10:25 a.m., the dept. was first responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence at Highlands Mountain Club.

Jan. 11

At 11:51 a.m., the dept. was first responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Hicks Road.

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Jan. 12

At 11:23 a.m., the dept. was first responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Mirror Lake Road.

Jan. 13

At 6:48 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at the hospital. It was false.

## ... SPIRITUALLY from page 8

tant that you as a believer understand correctly this principle of liberty of conscience.

Liberalism has worked tirelessly to change this philosophical concept. It has tried to block the church from any influence in the secular world. It has sought to silence any who would claim the right of the church to work in the political realm. There are even suggestions today that the church should not be allowed to speak out against such open sins as abortion and homosexuality.

But it is not just the secular world that has been changed. Many in the church have bought into such wrong philosophy. There are two violations occurring in this. The first is when men add commands that must be followed that are not from the Scripture. The second is when they ignore commands clearly given in Scripture. Christians in order to be salt and light must be true to God's Word. They cannot add to it or take away from it. This new philosophy says you don't need God's Word, men can best make their own laws. This will lead, to a time, where every man is doing what is right in his own eyes. This will be a time of utter chaos, leading to an absolute tyranny.

This is the great danger we face today, there are men who think they know best how we should all live. Their desire is to become our guide and to make us follow through the laws they pass. G. I. Williamson says, "It has been said that there is 'a pope in every man's heart.'" We are all tempted to think that we could improve our fellow men, if we had charge of their conscience.

We are likewise all liable to imagine that we are doing much better than others in the use of our cherished liberty. We would restrict others and relax strictures against ourselves. But the Scripture requires the reverse: charity towards others, and carefulness in the use of our own liberty.

We ought to give our brother the benefit of the any doubt. We should esteem others better than ourselves. And even where it appears that our brother has abused his liberty, we should correct in meekness taking heed to ourselves. Meanwhile, we should guard against the abuse of our liberty, taking heed that we do not make it an occasion of the flesh, and exercising care that we do not cause a weaker brother to stumble by the exercise of our liberty. If we do not return to such a philosophy all liberty will be lost and chaos will ensue which ultimately leads to tyranny.

## ... PARK from page 11

number of softball/baseball players in Western NC and the smallest number of fields and right now citizens play until 11 p.m. just to get a field.

Commissioner Paul Higdon spoke against proceeding if it meant committing to the master plan. This, even though all commissioners agreed the cost was too high and would likely cost less; that \$1 million is grant-funded; that Finance Director Lori Hall just saved taxpayers \$2.15

• See PARK page 14

165327



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# Upcoming Events

- Thurs, Sunday, Jan, 17, 20**
- PAC Youth Theater Auditions: Blue Ridge School: Wednesday, January 16, 2:45p; Summit Charter: Wednesday, January 16, 12:30pm and Thursday, January 17, 12:30p; Highlands School: Thursday, January 17, 3p; For All Students: at Highlands PAC, Sunday, January 20, 3p. Home Schooled students are invited to attend at any location.
- Saturday, Jan. 19**
- Highlands Plateau Greenway work trip. Anyone interested in participating, please register with Ran Shaffner by emailing [highlandsgreenway@nctv.com](mailto:highlandsgreenway@nctv.com) or leaving a message at 828-526-5622. We will begin work on the Mill Creek Trail from the Creek to Oak Lane. Meet at the large upper parking lot (near the pool entrance) behind the Rec Park at 9 AM for a brief orientation session. Participants will be furnished the necessary tools and safety equipment. Bring water, rain gear, and a day pack to hold them. Wearing clothes that can get dirty is advised. Please register since lunch will be provided by funding from the Cullasaja Women's Outreach.
- Sunday, Jan. 20**
- Pizza delivery fundraiser for HUMC youth going to Bolivia in March. On Sunday from noon to 8PM during the NFL divisional championship games pizzas will be delivered with prior order. Call HUMC at 526-3376 during church hours or on Sunday the 20th from 11AM to 7PM. The pizzas can be picked up at the church or delivered to your door by one of our volunteers. The popular

toppings include pepperoni, beef, sausage, black olives, green peppers, onions, mushrooms and three kinds of cheese. 1-2 toppings costs \$25 for a large pizza and three or more toppings costs \$35. Order forms are available at the Methodist Church, the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church.

**Monday, Jan, 21**

- Winter birding for waterfowl and other species at Lake Junaluska. Meet behind Wendy's in Cashiers to carpool to the Lake at 7:30 sharp. Dress warmly, including gloves, bring binoculars, scopes (if you have them), cameras and a good sense of humor, please! In case of rain/snow/ice, we will try the following Monday, Jan. 28. We will find a good, warm place for lunch following our birding before heading back to Cashiers. Questions? Call Romney at 526-1939 or email her at [croftess@brmemc.net](mailto:croftess@brmemc.net). Please let Romney know if you plan to participate, so that no one will be left behind.

**Tuesday, Jan 22**

- The Highlands Dialogue discussion is "Free Will and the Anders Brevik Trial" by Sarah Lucas and "Is Freedom a Mistaken Idea" by Frank S. Robinson. Handout available at the Library. Coordinator is Karen Hawk. Hudson Library from 10–11:30 a.m. For more information about the Highlands Dialogue or if you desire to be added to our mailing list, please e-mail John Gaston [johnsgaston@aol.com](mailto:johnsgaston@aol.com) or Karen Hawk [hwkncrw@earthlink.net](mailto:hwkncrw@earthlink.net).

**... WOOLDRIDGE from page 4**

but time is kind and patient. Time has a kind way of healing emotional wounds. Tell your dad I understand his feelings and I will pray for him. Now go home before the snow is so deep you'll have to carry Frisky."

To this day, I have a vivid memory of the three of us walking out the front doors of the school and then turning in opposite directions. After walking 10 feet or so, I turned to Sister Marianne and called out, "Goodbye, Sister. See you tomorrow." She didn't respond.

On the short walk to my parents' restaurant, I thought about the Germans and the attack on our ships at Pearl Harbor by the Japanese. When my parents discussed the war, I made it a point to listen, even though I didn't fully understand much of it. I also thought about forgiveness and what Sister Marianne said but decided I would still play, "kill the Japs and Krauts" with my friends in the alley behind my house.

- Part two will be presented next Thursday, Jan. 24..

**... PARK from page 13**

million by refinancing; and even though everyone knows it takes money to make money if the county wants to host the annual multi-million dollar travel league business.

"We are looking to make a decision to encumber Macon County for \$5 million," he said. "If voting on this – as bad as Macon County needs it, and as bad as our children need it – in the middle of a bad recession, my vote would be a resounding no."

Other commissioners said that vote wasn't the needed, yet. "We aren't voting to spend \$5 million and I don't think it's going to cost near that anyway," said Corbin. "We could develop in the future, or we could do the whole thing and get PARTF grants to do it, or anything in between."

Higdon said grants are taxpayers' money. "This is not a private grant, it is funding by tax dollars."

Corbin said PARTF has already been allocated the money. "They are going to give it to someone. It's my tax money, too, and I'd like to get some back. Very little comes to Macon County. I view this as a moving forward with the project but moving forward cautiously," he said.

Commissioners said they would discuss the issue further at the continuation meeting Saturday, Jan. 19 at 9 a.m. at the SCC campus on Siler Road.

**– Kim Lewicki**



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