

Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., April 3, 2014

'Zero tolerance' for violators of parking ordinance

The new nine-member Parking Committee met for the first time last Wednesday and unanimously got behind a proposal from Mayor Pat Taylor and staff which tweaks the current ordinance and steps up enforcement

of restrictions.

"What we have [the current ordinance] is about as good as we are going to get and we probably just need to tweak it a little," said Chamber president Bob Kieltyka. "It boils down to enforcement and

if it is well publicized, then this is the best solution."

Changes to the ordinance include restricting employee/merchant parking April 15 to December 31, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. -- a month and an hour longer.

Another change to the ordinance involves the penalty. Violators will have 15 days to pay the \$50 ticket not 30 days like before.

Though the enforcement of the ordinance will remain com-

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SCC gets nod for MOA to double campus size

By Brittany Burns

Progress continues on the possible expansion of Southwestern Community College's Macon Campus with a unanimous consensus from Macon County Commissioners to draft a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for additional access to county property.

SCC President Dr. Don Tomas has been working with SCC's Board of Trustees to develop a plan to expand the community college's Macon campus to accommodate its continued growth. With a 30-year master plan in place, commissioners showed their support during a special called meeting by directing county attorney Chester Jones to draft an MOA that would allow expansion of the Siler Road campus when funds become available.

With SCC's main campus
•See CAMPUS page 6

Pink Ladies take Polar Plunge for Relay for Life



On Monday, March 24, The Pink Ladies plunged into icy Lake Sequoyah to raise money for their Relay for Life team. To donate to their cause like Pam Chastain (in the pink) on Facebook.

Photos by Jim Lewicki

New appraisal shows Parker Meadows deal was a steal

By Brittany Burns

When MC commissioners voted to purchase the Parker Meadows property this past year they knew the value was probably less than the 2006 appraisal value of \$750,000 done by Guy Duvall.

Despite the 2006 appraisal, Macon County purchased the property for a fraction of that cost at only \$550,000.

However, Commissioners Paul Higdon and Ron Haven both thought a new appraisal would come in far lower than the asking price of \$550,000 and so were against its purchase.

With North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) funds paying for half the amount, the state requested a new appraisal of the property which was conducted by Vinson Appraisals.

As of March 13, the property was appraised at \$595,000 which means the county got it for \$45,000 less than it is currently worth.

County Manager Derek Roland said since the county got state funds through PARTF, two appraisals for the Parker Meadows property were required. The 2006 appraisal was submitted as part of the grant request and the

•See STEAL page 3

The teacher tenure war wages on...

By Brittany Burns

With their heads down and visible disappointment wearing on their faces, the Macon County Board of Education introduced a plan for the state mandate of selecting 25 percent of teachers in the district to receive a 4-year contract.

Board of Education
Chairman Jim Breedlove

introduced the agenda item. "Now on to something we are all dreading," he said. Board members shared his reluctance in approaching the topic by letting out sighs and shifting uncomfortably in their chairs during Monday night's March Board of Education meeting.

Macon County Director of Personnel presented board

members with the four-year selection plan that outlined the requirements and timeline needed to select teachers. The plan clearly defines that 272 teachers in the district are considered eligible for consideration for a four-year contract. The plan also explains that the state mandates only 25 percent, or 68 teachers, be

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

How did we get to the recent 22% electric rate increase?

Highlands entered the electric business in the late 1920s by generating power at the Lake Sequoyah hydro plant. In the 1950's the town supplemented its generating capacity by purchasing additional power from a big hydro electricity producer, Nantahala Power. In 1963 the town stopped producing its own power and entered into contract with Nantahala Power to supply the town. Through the 1990s the town had a fixed rate contract with Nantahala that resulted in Highlands maintaining low and stable electric rates.

Over a decade ago Duke Power purchased Nantahala Power and put Highlands under a new wholesale contract. Duke's did not allow us have a fixed rate like the Nantahala contract. It was the same variable rate structure other Duke wholesale customers had. To their credit, Duke said they would slowly phase in the rates so the town could make graduated adjustments over a period of years.

Instead of implementing these graduated increases, town decided to hold the line on the extremely low Nantahala rates as long as it could. Nevertheless, rate increases started to accumulate until customers were hit with a 22% increase at the start of 2013. Like other folks, I was shocked at such a jump and could not understand why. Since that time, I have studied the problem and would like to share the information I have learned since coming to office. I intend writing a series of articles on our utilities. I realize some folks may not agree with or accept my views, but I will try to be objective.

First, many think the cost of electricity in Highlands is one of the highest in Western Carolina. In fact, our per kilowatt rate we charge customers is in the lower third among area providers.

So, the question is, would Duke, or Haywood EMC, be a better overall value than our current utility?

With the rate increase last year, some groups in town thought it was time for Highlands to sell our utility and get out of the business. That is rather ironic, because after Hurricane Sandy, several towns on the Northeast coast considered going into the electric utility business. Many small towns had their electric grid destroyed by Sandy. A funny thing happened, the towns with their own electric utility got their power back rather fast, while other towns had to wait days, even weeks, on the large utility companies. Assessments after the storm revealed that the small town electric crews knew their systems so well that they could quickly respond to the trouble areas and make repairs. As a result, some of the towns that depended



on the big companies have explored creating their own locally controlled electric utility companies. The problem they have encountered is the prohibitive costs of doing so. Creating an electric utility today is an overwhelming expense.

If we were to sell our electric system the NC Local Government Commission would only allow us to sell the system at a fair market value.

We have been told by Duke that they cannot pay us what the system is worth as they simply could not justify such a purchase in light of how long it would take to realize any form of return on their investment.

Even if we manage to agree on price, Highlanders would still be facing constant rate increases from Duke, the wholesale provider.

For the foreseeable future, Duke forecasts increases of about 3 to 6% a year. They pass these costs on to their wholesale and retail customers. It is not just Highlands that is facing rate hikes, everyone is. In Duke's and the town's defense, just about everything goes up 3% or so each year. Since the 22% rate hike, the town has absorbed another 6% increase without passing it to customers. Food, gas, propane, natural gas do not have fixed costs. Natural gas, a fuel Duke uses for power generation, is projected to go up

about 10% in coming months due to the severe winter in the Midwest. Everything we consume on this high, isolated plateau has to be transported up the mountain by truck. What commodity remains at a flat price here, or anywhere? As we are constantly reminded, power will not remain at a flat rate either, although new natural gas reserves may bring some stability in the long term.

In my next article, I will discuss ways to manage future rate increases and alternative power sources.

• LETTERS •

The Affordable Care Act

Dear Editor,

With so much debate about the Affordable Care Act, aka Obamacare, I thought it might be enlightening to look back at a proposal by John Mackey, CEO of Whole Foods dating from 2009 and compare the train wreck we have now to his more practical plan.

He outlined a plan that was workable and in my opinion, made a lot more sense than the mess we ended up with.

Here is my summary of his ideas:

1. It is unfair that lawyers only pay about 10% of what doctors pay for malpractice in-

surance with some doctors paying hundreds of thousands a year for insurance and the cost of which is passed on in the form of higher medical fees and drug costs. As a group, I suspect trial lawyers lose roughly 50% of their cases but if doctors lost that many patients, they would end up in jail. He suggested Tort Reform to bring down costs of doctors as well as drug costs

2. The cost of medical insurance that companies provide their employees is deductible but individuals cannot deduct the cost of medical insurance. This is also unfair and needs to change.

3. Restrictions on insurance companies selling insurance across state lines should be eliminated which would increase competition and lower costs.

4. Individuals should be allowed to establish medical savings accounts to pay for higher deductibles, allowing them to buy lower cost insurance.

5. Medicaid would continue for the poor and supported by the rest of us.

From what I've seen and heard from the Left leaning Liberals, many of them believe in magic potions, healing hands and alternative medicines and take the view that the science of medicine consists of nothing more than a machine they can go up to and get a diagnosis for their condition. Indeed, many complain in countries with a government run single-payer system doctors and nurses view their patients as nothing more than robots like your car needing a lube job or a wheel alignment. The result is that doctors and patients lose their personal connection. Robots treating robots.

When John Mackey's idea was published in 2009 the reaction from the liberal left was immediate and explosive because they wanted to impose the same failing single-payer system other countries have been dealing with and still plagued with problems. The last I read, England still has over 1,000,000 waiting to get in and many die during the long waits.

Both Canada and England are allowing people to buy private insurance once again.

In the case of Obamacare, we're dealing with a huge number of people which dramatically complicates the problem of getting everyone insured leaving us open to fraud on a large scale as well as many people falling through the cracks.

So far, I've seen no alternatives proposals to Obamacare and it's time our politicians get something in the fire and the Mackey plan looks good and is simple."

Bob Wilson
Franklin

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Class of 2027
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• OBITUARIES •

Virginia Annette Hedden

Virginia Annette Hedden, age 89, of Franklin, passed away Friday, March 28. She was the daughter of the late Roy and Lilly Stanfield Keener. She was preceded in death by her husband, Theodore Hedden. She loved cooking for family and church friends; she was also a pink lady at Angel Medical Center. In addition to her husband, she was preceded in death by a son, Harley Hedden.

Virginia is survived by two daughters, Lillie Tallent and Martha Keener and husband Grant all of Franklin; six grandchildren, Missy Sanders, Angie Pickens, Joe Tallent, Wes Keener, Brooklynn Hopper, and Perrin Keener, and nine great-grandchildren, Dustin Sanders, Cory Sanders, Luke Sanders, Jordan Pickens, Daniel Pickens, Gabe Pickens, Abby Tallent, Maddy Tallent, and Kya Keener.

Funeral services were held in the Chapel of Bryant-Grant Funeral Home on Monday, March 31 with Rev. Don Moffitt and Rev. Michael Lee officiating. The burial took place at Sugarfork Baptist Church Cemetery. Pallbearers were Joe Tallent, Greg Rogers, Perrin Keener, Brooklynn Hopper, Daniel Pickens, Steve Maney, and Mack Stanfield.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements. Online condolences may be made at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com

Laurel Garden Club issues challenge to the community

The Laurel Garden Club of Highlands has issued a challenge to the community to assist the Highlands Biological Foundation in raising funds to reconstruct the wetland boardwalk in the Highlands Botanical Garden.

For every dollar donated by individuals or organizations towards the completion of the wetland boardwalk, the Laurel Garden Club will match up to \$5,000. Over the past two years, Mountain Findings and Kent and Alice Nelson have also donated funds towards this project.

The current boardwalk is falling apart and is now a patchwork of boards in varying states of deterioration. If the existing boardwalk is not replaced, it will need to be closed to the public for safety reasons. Closing this portion of the boardwalk would be a loss to the community.

This trail provides continuous access to unique wetland habitat and to the Coker Rhododendron Trail, an old-growth hemlock-hardwood cove forest. Labeled plants provide an educational resource for aspiring botanists and plant enthusiasts of all levels.



In addition, the Upper Lake Trail is a part of both the North Carolina Birding Trail and the Highlands Plateau Greenway, and this specific portion of the trail has been designated an "Important Birding Trail" by the North Carolina Audubon Society.

If you would like to donate your time or money to help with this project please contact us at (828) 526-2221 or visit our website at www.highlandsbiological.org/boardwalk/ where you can also find details about the construction materials that will be used.

improve both our economy and quality of life."

The facility's opening day is tentatively scheduled for mid-summer of 2015.

"Currently we are in the design phase of this project," said Roland. "Following completion of design and permitting, we will take the project to bid. As our engineers, architects and county staff continue to work diligently on this project, we are confident that we will begin the bidding process in the very near future."

...STEAL continued from page 1

second was submitted after the grant was awarded.

"The County paid \$550,000 for the Parker Meadows property," said Roland. "When you take into consideration the fact that we received \$500,000 in grant money, with \$250,000 of this grant going toward the actual purchase of the land, technically, we purchased this 48 +/- acre tract for \$300,000 or \$295,000 less than the appraised value [\$595,000]. This is a considerable savings to the taxpayers of Macon County on a purchase that will



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Saturday, April 5

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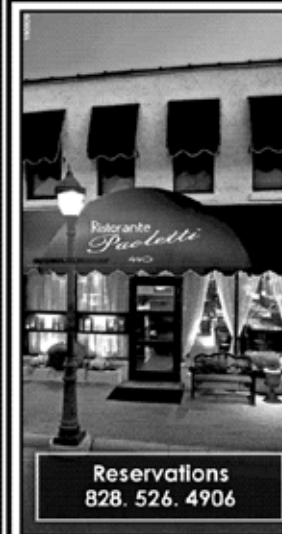
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Westside Story Matinee 2p
Pre-party 12:30
Tickets \$50: 828-526-2695

...TOLERANCE continued from page 1

plaint-driven, it now has sharper teeth.

From April 15 to May 15, violators will be issued one written warning. During this one month, if a violator has to be warned again, he or she will be issued a citation that carries a civil penalty of \$50.

After May 15, there will be a "zero tolerance" for any parking violation. Every violator will be issued a citation and given 15 days to pay the fine. If the fine isn't paid in 15 days, a civil summons will be issued from the magistrate. The violator will then have to appear in district court and not only pay the fine for the Class 3 misdemeanor, but court costs, too, which comes to -- a total of \$230.

The committee thinks after paying \$230 once or twice, habitual violators will soon toe the line. "It should only take a few of those tickets and subsequent costs for the problem to correct itself," said Keiltyka.

Though there has been some talk about the constitutionality of issuing parking tickets and taking violators to court, Police Chief Bill Harrell said legislation has been passed allowing municipalities to enact and enforce ordinances and Highlands' parking ordinance passed all merits.

He also said employers can't be held

responsible for their employees' actions because they have to "know" they are violating the ordinance. "The key word is 'knowingly,'" said Harrell. "That would be hard to prove."

Committee member Julian Franklin said Highlands is a four-legged stool consisting of -- environment, accommodations, restaurants and parking. "Without parking, the other three legs wouldn't be possible. Parking is regulated everywhere and the town has the responsibility to regulate and control parking," he said.

Mayor Taylor said no one is above the law, and though previous administrations allegedly told violators to "rip up the tickets," that won't be the case anymore.

"It is very important to hear that with this policy no one is above the law," said Harry Bears owner of Xtreme Threads. "The police are the authority for enforcement and no one should be able to 'make a call' and it go away."

Committee member and Commissioner Brian Stiehler, said the zero tolerance policy is crucial.

Since the ordinance is still complaint-driven, Chief Harrell said to report a violator, people should call 9-1-1 not Town Hall

• See TOLERANCE page 13



The Center for Life Enrichment

Nigel Sixsmith will be teaching the following iPad classes in April at CLE

1001 iPad Course: at a slower pace

Tue. & Thur., April 8-17 (4 sessions)
6:00-8:00 p.m. Cost \$125 Member/\$140 Non-member

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6:00-8:00 p.m. Cost \$70 Member/\$80 Non-member

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Tue. & Thur., April 29 & May 1
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...CAMPUS continued from page 1

in Jackson County, Tomas said the community college's goal is to offer a similar-sized campus in Macon County next to the library and the public school system's Early College.

SCC sits on 19 acres of Macon County owned land, and the Macon Campus was first constructed in 2007.

During the 2012-13 school year, more than 1,000 students from Macon County registered for classes at SCC. Enrollment numbers for the Fall semester hit an all-time high with more than 500 students taking classes at the Macon Campus.

"Since 2007, the Macon campus has experienced a 74.4 percent increase, averaging about a 12 percent increase per year," explained Tomas. "We have already outgrown the Groves building [on Siler Road] and are currently in the process of creating a master plan of what the expansion here would look like."

During discussion regarding the MOA, Commission Kevin Corbin said he believed the county purchased the land with education in mind. "I think we can all agree that we do not have any other plans to use this property for anything other than educational opportunities," said Corbin.

The board agreed and moved to develop a partnership with Tomas to allow the college access to the property surrounding the

current location for expansion. Tomas noted that while funds to grow the campus are not currently available, such an agreement will allow the process to move forward more quickly as grants money is released.

The 30-year master plan for the campus calls for the property to double the campus' size and utilize the full 40 acres of county owned property.

The college's program areas targeted for growth are centered around the Public Safety and Training Center courses currently being offered at SCC.

The Public Safety Training Center has seen an increase in enrollment of 72.9 percent over the last six years, averaging a 12 percent increase per year in enrollment numbers.

With the significant demands on the program, Tomas said new facilities were needed. The plan calls for a 35,000 square foot expansion of the Macon Campus so it can offer the same courses and curriculum as the Jackson Campus.

Further expansion plans include a 50,000 square foot Public Safety Training Center Building, and a 33,000 square foot facility to include an indoor firing range for students. Tomas said various departments, both local and in neighboring counties, use SCC's outdoor firearm training facilities and an indoor range would better suit the department's needs.

'La Bohème' Live in HD at PAC Saturday, April 5

The highly anticipated Metropolitan Opera performance of La Bohème by Puccini will be aired live in HD Saturday, April 5th at the Highlands PAC.

Star Italian tenor Vittorio Grigolo makes his Live in HD debut in the role of the passionate, penniless young poet, Rodolfo opposite the rising Romanian soprano, Anita Hartig in her highly anticipated MET debut as the seamstress Mimi.

Franco Zeffirelli's lavish production which features a cast of hundreds, (80 choristers, 100 supers, and 35 children) snowfall on stage, a horse, a mule and a detailed reconstruction of a Paris shopping district has been a favorite of the MET audiences since 1981. The Highlands PAC pre-opera discussion with Beverly Pittman begins at 12:30 and La Bohème begins at 12:55. Tickets are \$24, students are free due to the generosity of our underwriters. Tickets are available online: highlandspac.org or by calling 828.526.9047

Highlands PAC: 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands NC



Italian tenor Vittorio Grigolo

Art & Technology in April at Center for Life Enrichment

The Center for Life Enrichment (CLE) is jumping into spring, beginning its 2014 season in early April. The Center for Life Enrichment is a continuing education, non-profit organization. CLE has been offering continuing education opportunities to Highlands/Cashiers communities since 1992.

This year CLE will present approximately 106 lectures in Art and Architecture, Current Events, Literature, History, Philosophy, and Music. Hands on workshops will be offered in the areas of Art, The game of Bridge, Computer Technology, Culinary Arts, Gardening and Nature and Spanish language courses.

The CLE season begins Friday, April 4, with a class offered in conjunction with The Bascom's exhibition Out of the Ordinary. Curator Rebecca Dimling Cochran will be screening the film "The Cardboard Bernini". This exceptional documentary by the filmmaker Olympia Stone follows artist Jimmy Grashow through the construction, exhibition, and planned destruction of his monumental sculpture based on Bernini's famous marble fountain in Rome. The cost of the class is \$10 and will be held 4-5pm April 4 in the CLE lecture hall in the lower level of the Peggy Crosby Center at 348 S. 5th Street.

April classes continue in the evening with popular Apple instructor Nigel Sixsmith. Need a little help figuring out your iPad? Then the iPad course: at a slower pace, is perfect for you. This class will cover everything you need to know about how to use your iPad and iOS7, but with time to ask questions

and make sure you are using your iPad to your fullest advantage. The class will be Tuesdays & Thursdays, April 8-17 6-8pm. Cost: \$125 for members/\$140 nonmembers.

Updated for 2014 is the iCloud and Computer Security Class, covering everything you need to know about iCloud, sharing photos, music etc. Security issues, malware protection and other possible security risks will be addressed. The class will be Tuesday & Thursday, April 22 & 24, 6-8 pm. Cost \$70 members/\$80 nonmembers.

Finishing up the technology classes in April will be A Fun Guide to the Best iPad Applications. Learn about the best iPad and iPhone apps and how to use them in this fun and informative class. Class will be held Tuesday & Thursday, April 29 & May 1, 6-8 pm. Cost \$70 members/\$80 nonmembers.

*All classes are held in the CLE Lecture Hall unless otherwise noted.

Extraordinary Exhibition at The Bascom

Artists transform everyday objects into amazing works of art in the exhibition, Out of the Ordinary, which runs from April 5 – June 15, 2014. Organized by Independent Curator Rebecca Dimling Cochran, the show includes pieces by eight internationally recognized artists who use worn and often discarded materials as the building blocks of their creations.

From items as banal as water bottles, shredded tires and bubble gum, artists Chakaia Booker, Matthew Brandt, Long-Bin Chen, Willie Cole, Mary Engel, Vik Muniz, and Guerra de la Paz (the collaborative team of Alain Guerra and Neraldo de la Paz) make two and three-dimensional works that are fantastically inventive

and deceptively simple. The materials they use, however, are not merely found but chosen specifically for the symbolism or iconography that they add to the conceptual meaning of the work.

In conjunction with the exhibit, there will be a screening of the film "The Cardboard Bernini" on Friday, April 4, from 4 to 5:30 pm, at the CLE Lecture Hall. Afterwards, Cochran will lead a Q&A on the film, which documents the creation and eventual disintegration of a monumental work of sculpture intended to be left to the elements. She will also moderate a panel discussion with several of the attending artists at a reception on Saturday, May 31, from 5 to 7 pm.



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Ways to Make Your Home's Entryway Stand Out

(StatePoint) Impressions count when visitors arrive at your home's front door. It's the first and last space they see, and it has the power to make a positive or negative impression.

This season, consider an easy, cost-effective home improvement project that can add value to your home and boost curb appeal -- updating the main door and entry of your home.

Upgrade the Door

Start with the basics. Evaluate the look and condition of the front door to determine if it needs to be replaced. A front door should have good energy efficiency features, a snug fit to the frame, and an appealing color.

While wood was once the most popular material for doors, homeowners are shifting to alternatives. And for good reason -- a secure fiberglass door, such as those from Therma-Tru, can resist denting and scratching, is easy

to maintain, is energy efficient and can help keep your home quiet. Smooth fiberglass finishes are available for painting along with a variety of woodgrain finishes that have the look of wood, but all the benefits of fiberglass. More information on their ENERGY STAR qualified doors can be found at www.ThermaTru.com.

Trim the Door

Consider transforming a ho-hum home entry into a stylish entryway in less than an hour. With a door surround kit, such as those from Fypon, you can accessorize your entryway in various architectural styles. Available in Craftsman, Colonial, Stone and Empire styles, each kit offers weather-resistant polyurethane pieces that resist rotting, warping, cracking, insects, moisture and peeling.

The kits include trim, such as pilasters, cross-heads and keystones, and are a dynamic and quick way to enhance an entry



door.

As an alternative to a kit, you can order durable pilasters and pediment pieces individually. This allows you to select from dozens of decorative pediment designs to top off your door, such as a sunburst, rams head or peaked cap. For more information, visit www.Fypon.com.

Add Some Flair

To complete the look of your warm and inviting entryway, don't

forget to stain or paint your door to complement your home's exterior, as well as select decorative or privacy glass for the doorlites and sidelites. Next step, add some potted plants and a colorful welcome mat and you've transformed the look of your home entryway.


With a few easy upgrades, you can give your home a fresh new look that will leave a lasting impression.

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New Color Trends in Home Exteriors



(StatePoint) One of the simplest ways to make a big impact on your home's exterior is with your front door. But if you are tired of the old standards colors, you're not alone -- experts predict bolder trends this year.

"Exuberant hues will be popular this year as a way for homeowners to show the world their energy," says Kate Smith, a color trend forecaster and president of Sensational Color. "For those going for a classic feel, colors that are vibrant, yet at the same time, offer comfort, warmth and reliability will reign."

For homeowners looking to express their "colorful selves," consider selecting a paintable fiberglass door with a smooth finish. For example, those from Ther-

ma-Tru Classic-Craft Canvas Collection and Pulse, feature clean lines, crisp angles and attractive glass configuration options, and are ideal for adding personal expression to a home.

According to Smith, the top five door colors for the "exuberant homeowner" in 2014 include:

- Capri: A tropical blue that wakes up natural woods and neutral surroundings, this hue adds a splash of energy.

- Raucous Orange: This color demands attention with its energetic tone and makes the perfect punctuation point for homes with a modern look.

- Dynamo: This flirty violet hue instantly updates traditional color schemes for a trendier home front.

- Relic Bronze: A deep, almost brown mus-

tard color, "Relic Bronze" reflects aged beauty.

- Quixotic Plum: This sophisticated deep purple is where trendy meets timeless.

The top five door colors for those following the more classic trend of comfort, as identified by Smith include:

- Georgian Bay: Brighter than dark navy, this step-above reserved blue is a trusted color when it comes to the welcoming message it sends to family and friends.

- Show Stopper: Like classic red at dusk, "Show Stopper" adds a touch of mystery to this bright hue. A slight spin on traditional red, this color warmly welcomes people to a home.

- Polished Mahogany: The deep, rich shade of brown has a staying power that traverses trends and captures a solid feeling for homeowners.

- Classic French Grey: Stepping out of the shadows to stand on its own, this cool, neutral grey will continue to rule the palette in 2014.

- Gulfstream: This bright, modern blue has an of-the-moment appeal. At the same time, it still feels rooted in something familiar and nostalgic for homeowners.

Whether you follow new trends or stick to tradition, don't forget to take your entire home's exterior into consideration. From roof to door, a "top down" approach can help you pick color combinations that are eye-pleasing and flow naturally to create curb appeal.

For tips on picking the perfect colors for your home's exterior, including the front door, download a free copy of Smith's e-book at www.thermatru.com.



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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

Jesus will keep his promise to return

By Pastor Dan Robinson
Highlands Central Baptist Church

I recently conducted the funeral service for my second cousin. It took place in Candler, NC (just west of Asheville). We placed his body in the family cemetery. That plot of land (about an acre in size) was given by my grandparents for that precise purpose. They wanted the family to be buried together.

That cemetery is sacred to me. Not only are my various relatives buried there...but the bodies of my dad and first wife are likewise buried there. As I said: It is sacred. Upon concluding the graveside comments for my cousin, I remarked: "I hope I'll be alive when Jesus returns and in fact standing on my mother's carport (just across from the cemetery) so that I can see those graves burst open and the bodies of the saints rise to meet the Lord in the air."

And yes, friend, that really is going to happen. God Himself says so in I Thessalonians 4:13-17. I often envision how the event of our Lord's return might be interpreted around the world. The Bible indicates over and over that much of the world's population will not be ready for that day. Hence, while those who are born again (living and dead) will go with Jesus Christ back to Heaven...many hundreds of millions won't. The Bible further teaches that concurrent with our Lord's return there will be a period of seven terrible years on earth. Those years are referenced respectively as the "tribulation" and then the "great tribulation". Famine, disease, death, scorched earth, dried up waterways and more will characterize our earth during those unprecedented days. The atrocities of Hitler and the vulgarities of Sodom and Gomorrah will pale by comparison. It will be hell on earth.

Science Fiction? The ignorant ramblings of an unsophisticated preacher? The relics of a now gone and long forgotten Bible? No friend, Truth. Absolute and unequivocal. Jesus always keeps His Word. He is coming. If that were to happen today are you ready? The Bible defines that readiness as confessing our sins and turning from them, trusting Jesus Christ alone as our only Savior and living the rest of our lives for Him. If you haven't done that I hope you will. I've heard some preachers preach about the end times and judgment almost with giddy glee. I've never understood that. Those days will be distress, horror and terror to the exponential degree. Yet today Jesus Christ lovingly waits to rescue us from all that. I hope you will ask Him to do that for you. I hope you will do it today.

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• INVESTING AT 4,118 Ft. •

A seller's success is defined by the details

By Susie deVille
Owner/Broker-in-charge
White Oak Realty Group

One of my favorite tasks as a listing agent is to prepare for and deliver a listing presentation to a prospective Seller client. Clients love learning the process of how to become a savvy Seller. Recently, one property owner was so enamored with his newly-acquired expert status that he suggested I teach other Sellers the insider secrets.

As in all things, the first thing to cement into your mind is this: How you do anything is how you do everything. That is a credo that you as a Seller must abide, and that is also credo you must demand from your listing firm.

Your sales success rests completely upon the consistent execution of what may appear on the surface to be the small things.

There is plenty of chatter about

staging, cleaning, clutter removal, and making repairs, so I won't go into those details here; most likely, you already know the critical importance of those items.

Instead, let's focus on what is rarely discussed – and known – by Sellers. I'm going to call these the Seller's 9 Secrets to Sales Success (and What to Ask Your Prospective Listing Firm). Let's dive in!

Get clear on exactly what it is you want to have happen. This seems like such an obvious first step, but it is often overlooked. When I pose this question to Sellers, they have rarely thought beyond the desire to sell quickly at a premium price. Yes, those are the goals of both Seller and Firm, but comprise only a small part of the entire picture. So it is here that I ask folks to determine what is most important to them in the process, and how specifically the Seller wants to partner with their professional.

How does the Firm work? Find out how the Firm determines price, market position, and your property's ideal Buyer. Probe for details here. Ask to become educated on how a market analysis is conducted and participate in the decision-making process on price and position. Who is your competition and why? How may you enhance your property's attributes? What will the Firm do to market in a laser-like focus to those who most likely fit your ideal Buyer client profile?

What is the Firm's office culture? When you walk into the office, what kind of energy is there? Do you intuit a team environment and an entrepreneurial spirit? Do you sense passion, purpose, and vision? What is their reputation on working and living with ethics and integrity?

What kinds of systems does the Firm employ and leverage for maxi-

• See **INVESTING** page 14

...TENURE from page 1

selected in the district.

Macon County has decided that the 25 percent of teachers will be chosen through a lottery at random.

The selection plan does include an Opt-Out provision that would give teachers a chance to remove their name from any consideration regarding the 25 percent selection process. Board member Stephanie McCall asked why an Opt-Out provision was being included. "From talks I have had with teachers, they want to be able to turn the contract down outright, so why do we need an opt-out option?"

Breedlove explained that it was not so much about giving an opt-out option, but instead was a provision in the plan to not deny teachers the right to opt-out if they decide. Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin acknowledged that while there are some teachers who would like the opportunity to send a message to the state by turning down the contract if offered, other teachers might want to remove their names entirely to give teachers who may want and need the contract to receive it. By opting out of the process, the lottery pool is made smaller, increasing the odds of

those left in the pool of being selected.

The selection plan also outlined a timeline for the process to take place. Although Moore presented the board with the proposed plan, nothing was voted on. Board members expressed interest in holding off on any formal approval pending current challenges to the legislation on the state level. McCall and other board members are hopeful that the state will rescind the teacher tenure changes and a selection plan will not be needed. Holding onto that optimism, board members decided to wait until April 28 to formally adopt the plan.

If the board does approve the plan during the April board meeting, the Superintendent will provide a list of the 68 teachers selected for the contracts no later than Monday, May 24 for board approval. The selected teachers then have until June 30 to accept or reject the contract.

Not going down without a fight

Districts across the state are taking measures to plead with the state to reconsider the teacher tenure legislation. While some districts have gone as far as

rejecting the legislation entirely and refusing to implement it within their school system, Macon County believes that while they are legally obligated to follow the new law, they can at least inform legislators that they are not in agreement with it.

To voice their opposition and to show support for local teachers, the Macon County Board of Education unanimously voted to adopt a resolution to send to the state.

The resolution explains that the language of the legislation is vague and subject to multiple, inconsistent interpretations that will inevitably result in future lawsuits.

"This school system has far more than 25 percent of its teachers that deserve a pay raise given the excellent services they provide to our students; and therefore, the 25 percent mandate process is divisive, inequitable and demeaning to our teachers," reads the resolution.

The resolution further requests that the state allows local districts to use the funds appropriated in the state budget for the contracts to be used as seen fit.



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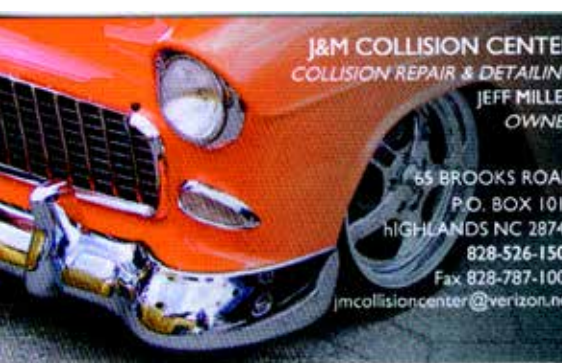
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• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands PD log entries from Jan. 1. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor, or public officials have been used.

Jan. 1

• At 9 a.m., officers took a report of criminal damage to property at a residence on Sagee Woods Drive where two cables attached to a gate were cut.

Feb. 25

• At 6 p.m., officers responded to an attempt to obtain money or property fraudulently at Mountain Fresh Grocery where someone attempted to get money for a fraudulent charity with the intent of keeping the money.

March 7

• At 4:20 p.m., officers responded to a domestic altercation at a residence on Smallwood Ave. between a juvenile, his sister, mother and father.

March 20

• At 9:35 a.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on US 64 west.

• At 9:40 a.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on US 64 west.

...TOLERANCE continued from page 5

and not the police station.

"Because of TV, people think calling 9-1-1 is only if a masked man enters their homes with a gun, but in Macon County everything goes through 9-1-1. All you say is you want to report a parking violation and then we are dispatched," he said. "Everything goes through 9-1-1; public utility problems and emergencies."

Changes to the ordinance will be discussed at the April Town Board meeting and presumably accepted by the board.

The Parking Committee will meet again in the near

The Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries from March 27

March 27

• At 9:01 a.m., the dept. responded to a medical alarm at a residence on Peace Mountain.

March 28

• At 10:48 a.m., the dept. responded to a vehicle accident on NC 106. There were no injuries.

March 29

• At 5:19 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Flat Mountain Road. It was false.

• At 9:18 a.m., the dept. responded to a mutual aid call from Cashiers. It was cancelled en route.

March 30

• At 6:37 a.m., the dept. responded to a vehicle accident at US 64 east and Cherrywood caused by slick conditions. There were no injuries.

• At 6:44 a.m., the dept. responded to a call about a power line down on Cobb Road.

• At 8:26 p.m., the dept. responded to a possible structure fire at a residence on Lucerne Drive. There was no damage.

future to discuss real estate exemptions to the parking ordinance – something the Planning Board also intends to consider -- the possibility of a trolley system to take visitors and employees to and from parking areas and even a parking garage.

Town Manager Bob Frye said all ideas will be considered but people need to think about who will pay for the ideas and what it would take to raise the money.

Committee members are Town Manager Bob Frye, Chief Bill Harrell, Planning Director Josh Ward, Chamber President Bob Kietlyka, Commissioner Brian Stiehler and merchants/citizens Leslie Scott, Harry Bears, Jerry Moore, and Julian Franklin.

– Kim Lewicki

• CLASSIFIEDS •

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• See CLASSIFIEDS page 14

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...INVESTING continued from page 11

mizing efficiency in daily operations, marketing, and delivering extraordinary customer service?

What is the Firm's brand and what tenets comprise it? Could you readily state 8 or so words that accurately describe their brand?

How visible are their bricks and mortar storefront and their online storefront? What do those storefronts look like, and do they connote success? How well positioned are they in the market, both online and offline?

Who is on the bus? Esteemed business researcher and author, Jim Collins, notes the importance of getting "the right people on the bus" when it comes to staffing and team. Inquire about the talent on the entire team and how strengths are shared and supported toward their clients' success.

When carefully scrutinizing how the Firm handles the smallest of details, what can you extrapolate about who they are and how they work?

What is their record of success? Ask for details on their past success and plans for maintaining/surpassing those levels of success in

the future. What are they testing and trying this year that is new? Do you have a sense that there is a lot of forward momentum? Do you perceive a restless desire to discover new ways of working and moving in the sales world?

By becoming an educated Seller and partnering with a Firm that dazzles you during the interview process (and then delivers consistently), sales success will surely be yours. Look for leadership and demand it from your Firm and from yourself.

• Susie deVille, ME, ABR, SFR, is Owner/Broker-in-Charge of White Oak Realty Group. Her areas of expertise include real estate investments, niche marketing, social media, and strategic property positioning. An expert in entrepreneurship and anthropology, Susie applies her acumen in human behavior toward negotiating and advocating on behalf of her clients. White Oak Realty Group's sales office is located at 125 South Fourth Street in the heart of the retail district in Highlands. For more information, visit WhiteOakRG.com or call (828) 526-8118.

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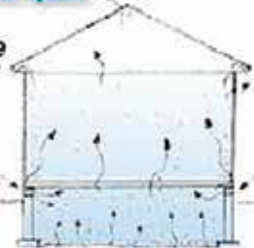
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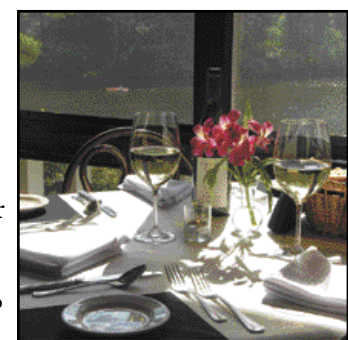
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