

Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

Volume 11, Number 7

Real-Time News, Weather & WebCams: HighlandsInfo.com

Thurs., Feb. 13, 2014

Mission Health matches Jane Woodruff's recent \$1 million gift to H-C Hospital

The Highlands-Cashiers Hospital (HCH) Foundation announced this week that an extraordinary gift of \$1 million

will be contributed by its lead philanthropist, Jane Woodruff, and that it will be matched by a \$1 million gift from Mission Health.

Ms. Woodruff stated: "I am very pleased to make this gift to HCH, which has provided compassionate and quality health

care to families in our local area for more than three generations. I appreciate Mission's decision

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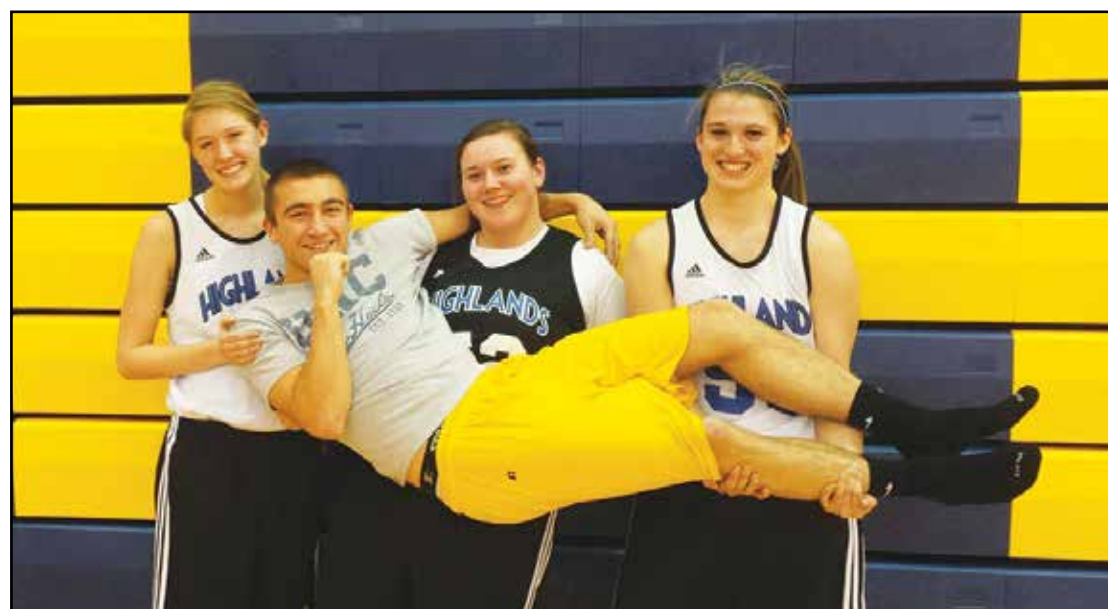
Teachers get legal advice about tenure regarding new 25% rule

By Brittany Burns

Questions regarding North Carolina's legislation changes involving teacher tenure status have plagued educators since the order was handed down from lawmakers. State lawmakers passed legislation last session that ends teacher tenure entirely by 2018, in exchange for 1 -2- or 4-year contracts, and bonuses for 25% of performing teachers in each district.

The vagueness of the law and open-ended language has lead districts across the state to seek legal counsel on how to carry out the mandate. In an attempt to answer questions asked by Macon County legislators, the local school board hosted Education Attorney Dean Shatley last Thursday. Shatley, a former educator, has become a pundit

•See **TENURE** page 15



From left, seniors Emily Gabbard, 17, Emily Shuler, 17, and Rebekah Parks, 18, hold Tyler Munger, 17, the lone senior on the boys' team

Photo by Kim Lewicki

Highlands School basketball teams prepare to say goodbye to their seniors

Senior Night is Friday night at home against rival Blue Ridge. Pink out for breast cancer!

The end of the upcoming Highlands School basketball season marks more than the end of court time for four seniors who have been scoring for Highlands for four years – it marks the beginning of their lives after Highlands School.

Rebekah Parks, 18, Emily Shuler, 17, Emily Gabbard, 17 and Tyler Munger, 17, were the only seniors on the girls and boys basketball teams this year – a label they wore proudly while respecting the responsibility and enjoying

its perks.

"Playing for Highlands School and then being the only seniors on the team taught us about responsibility, commitment and leadership and we were acutely aware of the influence we had over our younger teammates," said Rebekah Parks.

Emily Shuler, who tore her ACL at the start of the season, was just released by her doctors to play and is excited about playing the last home game Senior Night, Friday, February 14 at Highlands

School against rival Blue Ridge.

"Having this injury has helped me realize things about lifetime battles," she said. "Basketball is definitely my favorite sport and though I couldn't play most of the season, I realize how blessed I am because there are kids who have bigger problems than me – my leg hurts – it will get better. Those other kids won't get better."

Emily Gabbard said with Shuler out of the game most of

•See **SENIORS** page 8

Sheriff Dept. needs are outlined at worksession

By Brittany Burns

At the January mid-year review and worksession, Sheriff Robert Holland outlined accomplishments over the year and discussed budgetary needs in his department.

SROs

Since first being elected to office, Macon County Sheriff Robbie Holland has made school safety a top priority for his department. During the mid-year review last month, commissioners approved a matching

•See **SHERIFF** page 8

Work begins on new mental health system

By Davin Eldridge
Correspondent

As first vice president of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, County Commissioner Ronnie Beale met with other North Carolina county commissioners last month to discuss the statewide overhaul on mental health care.

The purpose of the Jan. 24 steering committee meeting, held in Raleigh's Coates Auditorium, was for NCACC members

•See **HEALTH** page 16

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• FORUM •

Here's how to raise NC teacher pay

By Jim Hunt
Former NC Governor

As North Carolina boards of education struggle to identify the 25% of teachers who will be eligible for a 4-year contract and a \$500 raise each of those years, I have a suggestion.

In the next four years, let's raise the pay of all our public school teachers to the national average. Not talk about it, or vaguely promise it, but do it.

Our hard-working teachers deserve it. Today their pay ranks 46 among the 50 states. They could make as much as \$10,000 a year more just by moving to South Carolina, Virginia or Tennessee to teach.

To reach this big, bold goal in four years, four things need to happen.

- North Carolina residents must see it as critical to the success of every child in our state. We the people must want to do it, we must speak up for it and we must pay for it.

- The governor and the General Assembly must believe it is necessary and must pass a law this year to do it.

- The governor and the legislature must appropriate the substantial money required each year to reach the goal.

- Over the four years of this effort, as we close in on the national average, the State Budget Office must calculate how much additional funding is required each year in light of the other states' raising their own pay levels.

These funding commitments must be very large, so the governor must recommend money each year and the legislature must appropriate it.

This may sound daunting. It is. But North Carolina did it before, and we can do it again.

Here's how we did it in the 1990s.

In 1996, I ran for a fourth term as governor on a platform of raising teacher pay to the national average. During the campaign, I talked with people all over the state about raising pay and improving teaching for all children. When North Carolinians elected me, they voted for that goal.

In 1997, I proposed the Excellent Schools Act to the General Assembly. The act, which raised standards for teach-

• See FORUM page 6

• LETTERS •

'Failed' Medicaid Program Nonsense

Dear Editor,

We have heard much from Governor McCrory and some leaders in the state legislature about our "failed" Medicaid program. This "fix" is despite the fact that Community Care of NC (CNCC), which manages care for 1.4 million of the 1.6 million state Medicaid patients, was recognized nationally in April 2013 as the model for delivery of Medicaid services.

Senator Richard Burr (R-NC) presented an award to CNCC from the Healthcare Leadership Council, a national group of healthcare CEOs, for quality AND efficiency and in particular praised the high quality of care delivered to patients in rural areas.

However, Art Pope's Civitas Institute has allocated funds to discredit the Medicaid program, the purpose seeming to be to further reduce funding to the program.

So what are the governor's plans? He

wants to privatize Medicaid. He wants to take this award winning, efficient, patient centered program and turn those state dollars over to several mega insurance companies, managed care HMOs.

It is his belief that a private business can better run such a large program and save our tax dollars. However, as has been shown with Medicare, a much larger program, only 1% is spent on administration. In contrast, managed care HMOs take 15% of healthcare dollars as profits.

Even if the state saves a few bucks (not a certainly), where does the 15% come from? It comes from reduced services to patients and further reductions in reimbursement to providers. Rural hospitals, especially, and providers depend on Medicaid income, but with increases in overhead and reduction in payments, many will not be able to survive and continue to serve those who

need it most.

Having been in private pediatric practice in Franklin for 37 years (and with a Medicaid population of about 60%), I have dealt with the current NC system as well as the managed care system in Georgia. Hands down, the current NC system much more efficiently serves the patients and is much more user friendly to the medical providers; there is far less red tape and fewer inexplicable denials of care than the managed care system in Georgia.

And there is that 15% profit going to insurance companies for performing a service the state can do for much less.

Please contact the governor, Jim Davis and Roger West and tell them the system is not broken; don't "fix" what is not broken.

Frederick A. Berger, M.D.
Franklin

Global Warming

Dear Editor,

At the outset, let me state flatly that I believe global weather patterns are changing.

But, gee whiz, I wish alarmists would quit playing games with the public. Scientists should not have to rely on smoke and mirrors to fool us and when they do, they make folks suspicious of their agenda. Science should never stoop to using the same games politicians use.

For example, showing a polar bear swimming around while a cameraman takes videos from solid ice doesn't exactly convince me the polar bear is about to drown.

Goofy videos on television showing steam, which is nothing but water vapor, coming out of a tall smokestack and calling it pollution fools only a few.

Ice crashing off of a glacier is a routine event; nothing unusual.

Contrary to computer predictions, the average world temperature has not warmed up for almost 16 years.

President Obama looked foolish when he attributed Hurricane Sandy to global warming. Sandy had nothing to do with global warming and was a result of Sandy moving north along the coast and being joined by an eastward moving low pressure area and then prevented from making its usual turn to the northeast by a high pressure system that blocked its way. It's happened before and it'll happen again.

We all know weather is cyclical; just ask a farmer.

Eric the Red gave up raising cattle in

• See LETTERS page 6

LETTERS-TO-THE EDITOR-POLICY

We reserve the right to reject or edit submissions.

NO ANONYMOUS LETTERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

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

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"Our Community Service - A Free Local Newspaper"

FREE every Thursday on the street and on the web;

Circulation 10,000

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

Email: HighlandsEditor@aol.com

Publisher/Editor – Kim Lewicki; Reporter: Brittany Burns

Copy Editor – Glenda Bell; Digital Media - Jim Lewicki

Locally owned and operated Kim & Jim Lewicki

Adobe PDF version at www.HighlandsInfo.com

265 Oak St.; P.O. Box 2703, Highlands, N.C., 28741

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• OBITUARIES •

Leo Alfred "Buddy" Frey, Jr.

Leo Alfred "Buddy" Frey, Jr., died January 22 in Live Oak, Florida. He was 86. Buddy was born to the late Leo Frey, Sr. and late Naomi Watkins, March 7, 1927, in Gary, Florida. Buddy served in the Coast Guard during World War II as a demolition diver, enlisting at 17. After an honorable discharge, he promptly headed home to Tampa, FL to marry his long-time love, Helen Lucille Frink.

Buddy was a gifted mechanic who joyfully repaired cars for over sixty years. During his lifetime, he owned two automotive repair shops, the first in Odessa, FL, and the second in Cashiers, NC, the mountain town where he relocated his family in 1974. Buddy also enjoyed creating custom "flivvers", vehicles he built from the ground up that were reminiscent of Model A trucks. He was a VW Beetle enthusiast, firearm collector, crack shot, and gifted storyteller. Buddy enjoyed shooting the breeze with his friends almost as much as he enjoyed spending time with his family. In 2007, he semi-retired and moved with his wife to Live Oak, FL. Buddy is preceded in death by his sons Forest and Valiant Frey, and daughter Susan Moss. He is survived by his wife of 68 years and three children: Robin Frey of Live Oak, FL; Dawn Cramer of Swanton, OH; and Heather Blanton of Apex, NC. He also leaves behind many beloved grandchildren and great-grandchildren. A memorial service was held Friday, February 7 at noon at Cashiers Church of God.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

Conrad White

Conrad White of Glenville, NC died Saturday, February 1, 2014 at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Born on September 10, 1926 in Waterville, Maine, he attended local schools including Coburn Classical Institute and Colby College where he earned a Bachelor's degree in 1949.

After graduation Conrad entered the broadcast industry as Assistant Program Director and disc-jockey at WNBH-WFMR in New Bedford MA. During this time he helped produce television talent programs for WJAR-TV in Providence, RI.

In 1954 he worked for CBS and ABC in New York City, following that with 13 years in broadcast advertising with NW Ayer Agency and several other film and tape production companies.

Prior to retiring, Conrad was Business Manager for a video news production company in Ridgewood, New Jersey where he and his family had lived since 1960. Retiring in 1990, the Whites moved to North Carolina and settled in Glenville.

He was a Navy veteran of WWII and the Korean War, serving on the USS Chilton, APA 38.

Conrad was active in the Church of the Good Shepherd in Cashiers as Junior Warden, Lector, Outreach Committee member, audio-video operator and one of the "Over the Hill Gang."

He was a tenor member of the Western Carolina Community Chorus for 24 years. The group performed in several cities in the East as well as four tours of Europe.

He is survived by Martha, his wife of 62 years, a son Arthur (Ellen) HoHoKus, NJ, a daughter Deborah Bryant (David), a granddaughter, Jessica, and grandson Dawson all of Cashiers, NC. Also surviving are a brother Richard and sisters Roberta Ann Fogg (Richard) and Elizabeth Morse (Wayne).

A memorial service will be held at the Church of the Good Shepherd Cashiers on Friday, February 21 at 4 PM. Reception to follow.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Frank Eugene 'Gene' Dendy

Frank Eugene "Gene" Dendy, 78, of Highlands, NC died Saturday, February 8, 2014. Born in Macon County, he was the son of the late Ellison and Delcie Gibson Dendy. He was self-employed in the landscaping business and liked to hunt and fish. He was of the Baptist faith.

Mr. Dendy is survived by one brother, Alton Dendy of Goldmine. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by two sisters, Hazel



McClure and Josephine Houston and three brothers, Harold, Alex and Ernest Dendy.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, February 15, 2014 at 2:00 pm at Goldmine Baptist Church with Rev. Gregg Rogers, Rev. Alton Dendy and Rev. Carson Gibson officiating. Burial will follow at Mt. Moriah Cemetery. Pallbearers will be Mike

• See OBITUARIES page 5

Bosnia Mission Fundraiser Dinner

Sunday, February 23 at noon

Join us at the Methodist Church for a fundraiser dinner to help build a barn for a family in Bosnia. The family gets a barn and receives a pregnant cow. The cow not only supplies nutrition and use for the family but also provides the family with an income source from milk and cheese

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...OBITUARIES continued from page 3

Dendy, Kelley Dendy, Richard McClure, Gary McClure, Shane Dendy, Stacey Dendy and Jay Dendy. The family will receive friends Saturday from 1-2 pm, one hour prior to the service, at the church.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to Mt. Moriah Cem-

etery Fund, c/o Mary Owens, 21 Pinecone Drive, Franklin, NC 28734.

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

Benny Spurlock

Benny Spurlock, 53, of Highlands died Friday, February 7, 2014 at his residence. Born in Macon County he was the son of the late Willie B. Spurlock and Eugenia Hall Spurlock. He was a graduate of Blue Ridge High School. He was a handyman and also a caregiver for his mother.

He is survived by three sisters Hazel Webb of Clarksville, GA, Carolyn Reynolds of Weaverville, NC and Nancy Webb of Hendersonville, NC; two brothers David Spurlock/Trantham of Tuckaseegee, NC and Clifton Kenneth Spurlock of High-



lands.

In addition to his parents he was preceded in death by one brother, Luther Eugene Spurlock. Funeral services were held Monday, February 10, 2014 at the Chapel of Bryant Grant Funeral Home in Highlands with Rev. Johnny Norris officiating. Burial was in the Greens Creek Cemetery. Pallbearers were Clarence Webb, William Webb, Albert Webb, Mike Franks, Nick Fox and Michael Webb.

Bryant Grant Funeral Home, Franklin NC was in charge of local arrangements.

William S. Conway

William S. Conway, 85, died February 6, 2014. He was born and raised in Oswego, NY where he attended Oswego High School and the Lawrenceville School. He received a BA in Economics from Hobart College, where he met his future wife, Diana Park Harder. He was a member of the Kappa Alpha Society and Kappa Beta Phi, National Honorary Fraternity. Following graduation and marriage in 1951 he entered the US Army. Serving as a Company Commander with the 185th Combat Engineers during the Korean War, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

He spent most of his business career as a Certified Financial Planner in the Atlanta, Georgia area before moving to the North Carolina mountain town of Highlands.

An active Episcopalian, he served his parish as both Junior and Senior Warden. He also served the Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina as member of its Executive Council and Chair of Fiscal Ministries. He received the Diocesan Dis-



tinguished Communicant award in 2004.

He was a former member of the local Zoning Board and a Director of the Peggy Crosby Center of Highlands.

Bill was a golf enthusiast, a voracious reader, a fanatical historian and so enjoyed sharing his many wonderful memories with friends and family, all who will

miss him dearly.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Diana Conway of Highlands, three children, William S. Conway, Jr., Pamela McInerney and John Conway all of Atlanta; and seven grandchildren.

Memorial services were held Friday, February 14, 2014 at 2 p.m. at The Episcopal Church of the Incarnation in Highlands with Rev. Bruce Walker officiating.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to The Episcopal Church of the Incarnation Bell Tower Fund, PO Box 729, Highlands, NC 28741

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

• MILESTONE •

David Long, son of Lynn and Valerie Long of Highlands, NC, was on the Dean's List for the 2013 Fall Semester as a freshman at Cedarville University in Ohio.

David is majoring in public communication. To be named to the Cedarville University's Dean's Honor List, a student must earn a 3.75 GPA for the semester, be carrying a load of at least 12 semester hours and have no grade lower than a "B" for the semester. David had a 4.0.

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...FORUM continued from page 2

ers and focused on greater learning by students, made a historic commitment to raise teacher pay to the national average in four years. It had powerful bipartisan support. It was co-sponsored by House Speaker Harold Brubaker, a Republican, and Senate President Pro Tem Marc Basnight, a Democrat. Democrats and Republicans supported it. The CEOs of 15 top North Carolina businesses went to the Legislative Building and strongly endorsed it. They knew it would boost economic growth and create jobs.

The bill passed overwhelmingly. We made the commitment. Then we put up

the money.

Over the next two years, we raised teacher pay by 6.5 percent each year. We created a new teacher-salary schedule. The cost was \$170 million each year – including bonuses for teachers who achieved National Board Certification.

And we appropriated \$72 million of ABC incentive funds for teachers in schools where annual student learning increased markedly. Every teacher in those schools could earn an extra \$750 or \$1,500 a year, depending on whether students met or exceeded learning goals.

In the years 1999-2001, we raised

teacher pay 7.5 percent each year, at a cost of \$240 million per year. We also appropriated an additional \$140 million for teacher incentive awards.

And in all four years, we paid teachers more for extra days worked and greater professional development.

By the year 2001, teacher pay in North Carolina had reached the national average. The average teacher's salary went up more than a third – from \$31,000 to \$42,000. We rose from 43 in the national rankings to the top 20.

Student learning went up, too. Our average SAT scores rose 40 points, more than any other state. Our students made the highest gains on the National Assessment of Educational Progress of any state.

We proved we could do it, and we proved it was a wise investment. Now we need to do it again.

I talk to too many school teachers who are discouraged and demoralized. One Forsyth County teacher with 18 years' experience worked a second job over the holidays, selling shoes in a mall. Some teachers make so little they qualify for Medicaid. Many teachers spend hundreds of dollars out of their own paychecks to buy classroom supplies.

We owe them a fair salary, and we owe it to their students. After all, the purpose of improving teaching is to help students learn more. We want to prepare each student in each school to be successful in a competitive world.

I believe North Carolinians want their teachers to be paid at the national average. They want our state's elected leaders to commit us to this goal. They want our state to make a bipartisan, iron-clad commitment this year to raise teacher pay to the national average in four years.

• Jim Hunt, a Democrat, served as North Carolina's governor from 1977 to 1985 and from 1993 to 2001.

...LETTERS from page 2

Greenland because it got too cold to grow grass to feed their cattle. We also know that we only came out of a mini ice age in the mid 1800s and unable to grow food crops, many died of starvation during that cold period.

Warming and cooling took place long before the industrial revolution so it can't be blamed.

Unless we can get China and India to stop building one coal fired power plant a week, sacrificing America's economy will not slow things down. Even now, soot and pollution from China makes its way across the Pacific to our west coast. Short of going to war with Asia, there is nothing Americans can do.

In spite of what we are told, the evidence is not incontrovertible and there are qualified scientists out there who disagree with the causes of global weather changes. The computer models used to predict weather were outdated and simply wrong.

In the meantime, the radical anti-fracking group would stop the use of natural gas which is our best way to reduce carbon output. Where is the logic in that?

If global warming facts are so solid, there is no sense in using tricks to make their point. Hopefully, this isn't the way most science is done for otherwise we'd be in a whole heap of trouble.

Was it Lincoln who said "fool me once and it's your fault but fool me twice and it's my fault?"

Bob Wilson
Franklin, NC



Town of Highlands

Notice of Public Hearing

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing will be held by the Town of Highlands Board of Commissioners at the Highlands Community Building, 71 Poplar Street, on the **20th day of February, 2014** beginning at 7 pm, for proposed rezoning of Town of Highlands Properties to Governmental/Institutional. The proposed properties to be rezoned are:

1. Town of Highlands Water Treatment Plant

7530876490 (440 Hickory Hill Road–Water Plant–3.87 acres–Current Zoning R-2)

7530875150 (Hickory Hill Road–Tank Site–0.5 acre–Current Zoning R-2)

7530874431 (Sequoyah Ridge Road–Vacant–1.00 acre–Current Zoning R-2)

7530872068 (Sequoyah Ridge Road–Vacant–1.15 acre–Current Zoning R-2)

2. Highlands Cemetery

7540350070 (Memorial Park Drive–7.53 acres–Current Zoning R-2)

3. Little Bearpen Mountain

7540443272 (South Drive/Lot 37 Greenwood Forest–Water Tank–0.58 acre–Current Zoning R-1)

7540442192 (South Drive/Tract 2 Liz Development Corporation–Water Tank–0.3 acre–Current Zoning R-1)

7540442215 (South Drive/Lot 37A Greenwood Forest–Water Tank–0.5 acre–Current Zoning R-1)

4. Big Bearpen Mountain

7540832521 (Big Bearpen Rd–Water Tank & Tower–0.06 acre–Current Zoning R-1)

7540833422 (Big Bearpen Rd/Part of Lot 6 Summit of Bearpen Mountain–Water Tank–0.08 acre–Current Zoning R-1)

5. Satulah Mountain

7449467692 (Worley Rd–Tower–0.06 acre–Current Zoning R-1)

7449466437 (Worley Rd–Water Tank–0.27 acre–Current Zoning R-1)

7449377657 (Old Walhalla Rd–Water Tank–0.18 acre–Current Zoning R-1)

6. Ravenel Ridge

7449650488 (Little Creek Rd–Water Tank–0.23 acre–Current Zoning R-1)

7. Dog Mountain

7530412486 (Dog Mtn Rd/Lot 7A Town & Country–Water Tank–0.08 acre–Current Zoning R-1)

8. Maple Street

7540326021 (Portion of 30 Acres containing Rec. Park & old Sewer Plant from Maple Street to old Sewer Plant–Current Zoning B-3)

9. Oak Lane

7540320492 (Highlands Greenway Trail Entrance–0.31 acre–Current Zoning R-2)

10. Highlands Visitor Center & Chamber of Commerce

7540218501 (131 North First Street–0.34 acre–Current Zoning B-3)

11. Kelsey Hutchinson Park

7540407777 (224 North Fifth Street (Pine Street)–0.36 acre–Current Zoning B-2)

All interested residents/citizens are encouraged to attend. Copies of the proposed Zoning Map Amendment is on file in the Town Clerk's office at Town Hall, 210 N. 4th Street for inspection by all between the hours of 8:00am and 4:30pm Monday through Friday.

Rebecca R. Shuler, CMC, NCCMC
Town Clerk



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...SHERIFF continued from page 1

grant that would allow a full-time school resource officer be placed at Nantahala School.

Holland has advocated for school resource officers and has built the program to include seven SROs provided by the Sheriff's Department. Highlands Police Department has taken it upon them-

selves to ensure the safety of students, and provides a full-time officer at Highlands School. Highlands Police Department knows all too well the importance of an SRO, as Highlands Police Chief Bill Harrell served as Macon County's very first SRO under Sheriff Holland.

Holland has reorganized his depart-

ment in past years to create SRO positions, which has caused the elimination of other repositions on his force.

After the Sandy Hook tragedy, Holland began last year urging commissioners to consider providing school resource officers at every school in the county. With budget constraints and other priorities to focus on, Holland asked commissioners to consider adding one or two officers a year until each school in the district was covered. Last year Holland requested two SROs, one for Nantahala School, and another that would split time between Union Academy and South Macon Elementary. Commissioners approved funding for one officer, which was placed at Union and South Macon.

Although commissioners did not provide funding for an SRO at Nantahala, Holland once again re-organized his officers to accommodate the position to meet what he considered to be a significant need. Operating with one less full-time patrol officer, Holland took the advice of commissioners and explored grant opportunities that would provide the county with funding for additional SROs. Holland informed commissioners during the retreat that if the county was willing to provide \$18,185 in matching funds, his department could receive \$39,722 from the state to provide an SRO for one year. Additional funds will be needed to cover the cost, which Holland assured commissioners he would be able to find within his existing budget.

Macon County Commissioner Paul Higdon expressed concerns regarding using funds in the current year's budget for the position because it had been previously discussed that the Nantahala position would be part of the 2014-15 budget year discussion.

The grant Macon County was awarded came with an expiration date of June 30, meaning the funds needed to be utilized within the current year's budget.

In 3-1 vote, commissioners approved to allocate the funds needed to secure the position in Nantahala. Higdon was the opposing vote and Commissioner Ron Haven was absent from the meeting.

Holland also informed commissioners that in the upcoming budget year, he plans to ask commissioners to continue their commitment to school safety and consider adding an additional SRO for the county.

Prescription Pills

With prescription pills being the leading cause for drug related cases in Macon County, Holland informed commissioners that he would also be seeking additional funds in the upcoming year to combat the war on drugs. Holland plans to request a \$19,000 increase in his department's budget to purchase drugs for undercover operations. Generally, commissioners provide

\$1,000 annually for this cause, which Holland does not believe to be enough to allow his department the adequate resources needed. Holland insisted that the additional monies are crucial in fighting the county's drug problem. The \$1,000 line item specifically for the sheriff's office undercover drug operations has remained the same since it was first established in the 1990s.

The county is not the only means for Holland to access funds for undercover operations, however it is the quickest. His team also has access to a special revenue account that consolidates funds based on items seized during undercover operations. That account is managed by the state, and after going through a vetting process, some monies can be given to the county. The special money is provided to law enforcement specifically for undercover investigations of narcotics, stolen goods and payment to confidential informants.

In special circumstances, typically for large operations, Holland and his department also can use funds for operations through federal and state dollars. The best means for obtaining a conviction in court is to conduct an undercover operation to obtain information, explained Holland.

Vehicles

Upgrading the county's emergency fleet continues to be a priority in the budgeting process as Holland told commissioners that he would once again ask for five new patrol cars. Continuing to replace the county's law enforcement fleet on a rotating basis, with a fleet of 25 patrol cars, the vehicles average 25,000 miles a year. Seven of the county's existing patrol cars have crossed over the 100,000 mile mark, and for a patrol car which is expected to perform duties differently than the average vehicle, 100,000 is a considerable amount.

The cars that have been identified as needing to be replaced were marked as priority by the county's maintenance supervisor, as the maintenance department is in charge of any and all recommendations regarding vehicle replacement.

Holland assured commissioners that his team manages the cars within the departments as best as possible, and as vehicles age and earn excess miles, the vehicles are swapped with positions that travel less such as school resource officers.

...SENIORS from 1

the season she and Parks shouldered a lot of responsibility.

"There was pressure, because without Shuler it was just Parks and me leading the

• See SENIOR page 9



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• BIZ/ORG. NEWS •

Economic forecast means growth for NC Retail Focuses on Education to Sustain Progress Nearly \$90k in scholarships to be given to NC communities

Retail sales were higher than expected for December, and the outlook for 2014 is optimistic. In fact, local economists estimate between 2.5 and 2.8 million U.S. jobs will be created this year. In North Carolina, approximately 100,000 new jobs are expected and many of these will be in retail.

Businesses estimate the strength of consumer spending because it helps in planning. A solid forecast offers consumer confidence along with opportunities that strengthen communities. In 2014, the NC Retail Merchants Association (NCRMA) and its grocery division, the Carolinas Food Industry Council (CFIC), will support communities across North Carolina by helping high school and college students pursue their career goals. The two organizations, through the Retail Consumer Alliance Foundation (RCA), will give away close to \$90k in scholarships this year.

“When most people think of retail jobs, they think of front-line store associates. But the reality is that the retail industry generates 17% of labor income in the state,” said NCRMA President and General Counsel Andy Ellen. “Retail powers North Carolina’s economy with both large and small employers, supporting over 600,000 jobs at headquarters and distribution centers. It also works with education to reach the same goals, including a strong and sustainable job market driven by competitive innovation. By supporting higher education goals, we can connect students to opportunities in the economy.”

Thirty-five awards valued at \$2,500 each are being offered through NCRMA and its grocery division, the Carolinas Food Industry Council (CFIC). The awards will be offered to high school and college students working in the retail in-

dustry or whose parents work in the retail industry to support the 2014-2015 academic year. Unlike traditional scholarship programs that only reward the highest level of academic achievement, NCRMA and CFIC will recognize students whose academic credentials fall within an average to above-average range. Applications and official transcripts must be received or post-marked by Monday, March 3, 2014. For information regarding application requirements or to apply, go to: <http://www.retailpaysforcollege.org>.

Funding for the 35 scholarships is provided through the NC Retail Consumer Alliance, a nonprofit retail foundation that works with consumers to build strong communities.

On the national level, the National Retail Federation (NRF) is collaborating with University of Phoenix to award 20 full-tuition scholarships to people in retail who want to enhance their career through education. The scholarships are open to applicants currently working full-time or part-time for any retail or restaurant company, and the program allows recipients to earn their bachelor’s or master’s degree while continuing to work and live at home. For more information, go to www.phoenix.edu/dreambig.

“The retail industry is a force for economic expansion, job creation, and business growth,” said Ellen. “Locally, NCRMA’s primary mission is to serve the legislative needs of North Carolina’s retail industry. But we also know how important it is to prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow, and many of these will be in retail. Retail offers life-long career options that range from finance and engineering to design and marketing. We never lose sight of the role education plays in a competitive economy.”

Stroud elected to serve on NCAF



David Stroud, Executive Director of the Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society, has been elected in a statewide vote of animal welfare professionals to serve on the Board of Directors for the North Carolina Animal Federation (NCAF). Only 10 directors were chosen from across the state to serve. Additionally, when the new NCAF Board of Directors met last week, they voted Stroud to the position of Vice Chairman of the Board.

The NCAF unites statewide animal welfare organizations and their professionals.

...SENIORS continued from page 8

team, but we all get along great because since we’ve known each other so long we are like family,” she said.

Familiarity is but one perk of going to a K-12 school where students interact their entire school life.

“It’s nice being in a little school because you don’t have to try out to be on a team,” said Shuler.

Parks agreed, plus athletes get a lot of “play” time, she said.

“As a team we are a lot closer than at bigger schools. In big schools they have their JV and varsity teams and athletes don’t really get to interact. We interact with all the other players.”

Tyler Munger said his last year on the team has been a good one.

“I’ve been playing for four years and this is the first year we haven’t had a lot of drama. I am proud of how we all get along, how everyone is easy going. Basically, everyone wants to win and wants to do well.”

Head Coach Brett Lamb and his athletes said the winter weather has made it a tough year this basketball season.

“We’d miss three days of practice and then come back to play a game so our mindset would be really off,” said Munger.

But still, Lamb said the girls are tied for second place with Nantahala School. The boys are in sole position of first.

For now Munger said he wants to win on Senior night, win the conference tournament and he really wants to go farther in state than Highlands has ever gone before.

“We are looking to finishing out strong,” said Lamb. “We have Blue Ridge on Friday then roll into the conference tournament. For us if we end up tied with Nantahala we have to beat them in the first round of playoffs to advance into the tournament.”

Since he’s been on the basketball team for four years, Munger has played for the late Coach Butch Smart, Ryan Potts and the current coach Brad Bergman. He called Smart and Bergman “tough.”

“Playing for Coach Smart was tough. I quickly learned you had to play the best you could to stand out. If you didn’t bring something to the table he could work with, you were just there. So you had to do your best to show that you could actually play,” he said. “Smart and Bergman were/are tough as to what they made/make you do ... running and all that. Bergman isn’t soft on us so we aren’t a soft team. And he’s a good coach. What he’s teaching us is right and it’s good to know. So we don’t have a problem with it.”

As to coaching styles and trials and tribulations of team life, Parks offers this

to upcoming athletes.

“When you are first starting out, it might seem bad, but it isn’t always as bad as it seems.”

Coach Lamb spoke fondly of his outgoing seniors.

“Those three girls have been warriors. They are three of the most injured kids I’ve had for four years. Emily Gabbard’s had two concussions, Emily Shuler tore her ACL and Rebekah Parks has a shoulder continuously popping in and out but they continued to battle. A lot of kids would have just hung it up. But they stuck with it. They have been great teammates to the other girls on the team and good leaders for us. They will be sorely missed.”

Called high-caliber players, Shuler was all conference two years prior her ACL injury. Parks is in the top 10 in Western North Carolina in rebounding and though Gabbard is small in stature, Lamb says she is very rugged and has been a really good player.

“It’s been fun to watch them grow from Freshmen until now,” he said.

As for Munger, Lamb said “he’s a heck of a player.”

“He is one of the best athletes that’s ever played for Highlands School. He has another gear he goes into. He’ll have the ball and you will think he’s going pretty fast and then he puts it in that other gear and he just blows by people. He’s fun to watch. He makes the game fun.”

Lamb said Munger leads his team in assists and steals and though his scoring is down a little bit this year, his teammates scoring is up and that’s attributed to him as a leader.

“All four seniors will be missed. They are small in numbers – three on the girls and one on the boys – but sometimes in a small school like ours that counts,” said Lamb.

As to college, Munger hopes to attend Virginia Beach Community College to study graphic arts and hopes to play soccer for the school. Shuler has her sights on Mars Hill or NC State where she wants to study sports medicine and hopes to play softball. Parks plans to pick NC State, UNC Asheville, or Bryan College where she wants to study broadcast journalism and hopes to play soccer. Gabbard is headed to either UNC Chapel Hill, Clemson or the University of Florida to study marketing and hopefully play golf.

Senior Night at Highlands School this Friday is dedicated to the fight against breast cancer. Everyone is encouraged to wear pink.

– Kim Lewicki

• REAL ESTATE SNAPSHOTS •



MountainTop Golf Club – Designed by Keith Summerour on 1.8 acres adjacent to a conservation easement of 6 acres. 5/4.5 with 3 fireplaces. MLS# 68782 \$2,295,000



Highgate – Reminiscent of an Australian Farmhouse with 4 bedroom suites and multiple living areas. Designer furnished, on a level lot bordering a stream and pond. 4/4 MLS# 75045 \$2,150,000



Highlands Falls CC – Mountain Contemporary home with Whiteside Mtn views. Multiple living areas. Stone patio next to a stream. 3/3/2 MLS#76535 \$1,350,000



Bowery Road – Southern Living floorplan with wood walls, custom cabinetry, bonus room over the garage. 3/4.5 baths. MLS #73191 \$1,250,000



Highlands Falls CC – Oversized deck with Whiteside Mtn. Lots of glass, open floor plan, lower level family room, workshop. 5/4 MLS# 73335 \$1,127,000



In town – Historic home in walking distance to everything Highlands has to offer 4/4 in main house plus a 2/1 guest house. 1.5 acres, backs to Land Trust property. MLS# 77845 \$995,000



Walhalla Road – On the National Historic Registry. Completely restored. Authentic finishes with modern conveniences. 5/3 MLS #76487 \$850,000



Highlands Falls CC – located at the end of a cul de sac with National Forest on two sides. 3/3 with beautiful, easy care landscaping. MLS#67817 \$795,000



Big Bearpen Mountain – Old Highlands Charm with a mountain view. Vaulted living room ceiling with pine walls – opens to screened porch and sun room. 4/4 MLS#71520 \$699,000



In Town - This charming updated cottage is situated down a lovely garden path bordered by lush ivy and pachysandra and a small stream 2/2 Move in ready. MLS#78186 \$435,000



Like new 3br/2ba home in Highlands Falls CC with adjacent stream and private cul-de-sac location. \$369,000. MLS# 75733



English cottage in The Cotswolds. 3br/3.5ba, very private with long winding driveway, lovely landscaping and views. \$797,000. MLS# 75521



4br/5ba home next to Highlands Falls Country Club with lower level family room, bonus room, 2 fireplaces, granite kitchen, wood floors. \$627,000. MLS# 76569



Highlands Falls Country Club. Sitting by a stream, enjoy this 3br/3ba with large deck for entertaining, fully furnished. \$397,000. MLS# 76006



Exquisite lodge-style home in Highlands Falls Country Club. 5br/5.5ba home with 5 masonry fireplaces, Whiteside Mountain view. \$2,250,000. MLS# 77789



Magical mountain views from this VZ Top condo with 3br/2ba, cozy fireplace, bright and airy. Just 4 steps to walk into from the street. \$235,000. MLS# 77067



Close to Town, single level living, immaculate home w/ 3ba, 2ba, 2-car garage, wood floors in main living area and private deck. \$310,000. MLS# 76926



Mountain views from this 3br/3ba with family room in Highlands Falls CC on private acre lot adjoining USFS. \$497,000. MLS# 73006



Just outside city limits, this 1947 Log Cabin on 2.84 acres has 3br/3ba, 2 lofts, sunroom and stone patio. \$249,000. MLS# 76384



Highlands Falls CC free standing condo with 3br/3ba, beautifully furnished, golf course view and zero maintenance. \$425,000. MLS# 74042

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Online Real Estate Resources

By Wanda Klodosky
Landmark Realty Group



The internet has empowered us to explore information in every facet of our lives.

In the early to mid-2000s, several websites focused on the real estate market and became go-to resources for many consumers.

These websites offer an easy to use interface and a huge amount of information. While each offers value to the consumer, it is important to understand how the information is gathered and how reliable it may be to leverage that value.

The three major national players are Realtor.com, Zillow.

com and Trulia.com. There are also some other invaluable and often overlooked resources you should consider as well. Let us go through the top 3.

Realtor.com is currently the longest running and was the most popular of the three. A product of Move, Inc., a publicly traded company, Realtor.com gathers information from over 900 Multiple Listing Services across the nation. Realtor.com generates revenue by selling advertising space on its websites to companies and to REALTORS to increase a home's exposure. The key point to remember is that the information they provide is from local real estate agents via their local MLS services.

Zillow and Trulia, are now well

established in this segment, and although newcomers, they operate far below the budget of Realtor.com and have gained the lead over the past year. As of December of 2013, Zillow leads with over 15% of the share of visits. Both Zillow and Trulia pull information from county public records as well as lo-

cal real estate information. They then combine this information and present it to you in their own unique way. This often results in conflicting information as each site has to determine which information to show. They both offer some great features such as easy-to-use mapping, loads of stats and Zillow

has the coined 'Zestimates'.

A Zestimate is Zillow's estimated market value, computed using a proprietary formula. It is important not to confuse this with an appraisal where a professional appraiser evaluates a home in person.

• See INVESTING page 12

• REAL ESTATE SNAPSHOTS •

Turn-Key Condo w/Lovely Views



Beautiful mountain views from this worry-free, 2BR/2BA upper unit! Enjoy a book or a glass of wine by the fireplace or out on the deck. Close to town, yet private and quiet setting. Move-in ready and sold completely furnished (just a few exceptions). Amenities include swimming pool, club house, and tennis courts. Owner is allowed to have one pet at the unit. Offered at \$278,000. MLS #78480.

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Premier Lot in Gated, In-Town Community



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Susie deVille,
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...INVESTING continued from page 11

According to Fortune, "Zillow has Zestimated the value of 57 percent of U.S. housing stock, but only 65 percent of that could be considered 'accurate'—by its definition, within 10 percent of the actual selling price. The Wall Street Journal ... when Zillow is bad, it can be terrible." For instance, we have a listing on the market offered for just over \$1,000,000. The Zestimate for this property is just below what we offer it for. If you take a look at the Zestimate range for this property, you'll see a spread of over \$500,000! Another example is local property that is listed for \$4,995,000 has a current Zestimate of \$4,408,940 and the Zestimate spread is over \$2,000,000! Zillow also shows this property increased in value by \$2,700,000 from August to De-

cember of 2013.

So what does all this mean? Use these resources as a starting point for general information but be cautious as the reliability varies widely. Your best resources are local real estate professionals and their websites. Nearly everyone starts their search on the internet and then over 88% of all home buyers choose to use a realtor within the first 3 to 4 weeks of their home buying process.

Some of the most accurate information on the real estate market are websites of local real estate companies using data feeds from their area MLS. These websites also offer great resources such as articles focusing on the local market, information about businesses in the area and great tips on buying or selling property in their market.

LandmarkRG.com provides a complete listing of all properties offered for sale in the Highlands-Cashiers MLS and updates these listings as soon as the MLS is updated.

While all of these internet resources offer convenient access and great value, there is one often overlooked resource that everyone should utilize; Your local REALTOR! Local REALTORS have the knowledge and expertise of the local market to best assist you with your real estate needs.

Landmark Realty Group is a leading real estate company on the Highlands-Cashiers plateau. Established in 2004 it has focused on providing high quality service for all its clients. Wanda Klodosky is very active in local organizations and has been a great addition to The Landmark Team. Make sure Wanda is on the top of your list of contacts when making real estate decisions.

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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

Show your love every day

By Paul Christy
Pastor Highlands United Methodist Church

As I write this column this week, we are in the week of the year when chocolate and flowers take a front seat in the American way of life -- the week of Valentine's Day.

This Friday, couples, children, and all of us will express our love to each other by buying chocolate, sending flowers, sending cards and going out to eat. Yes, this is the week when we are not afraid to share and show our love to one another.

I remember when my wife and I were first married, our very first Valentine's Day, I went to Sears with my new Sears credit card and I got her a VCR player. It was the latest and greatest VCR player, and out of my love for her, I gave her the new VCR player. Now mind you she did not ask for it, nor did she dream about having a VCR player, but I did. And after I gave her the VCR player, I made this bold and powerful statement, "This will be your Valentine's present for life, in other words I am not going to buy you anything else for Valentine's Day ever because this is the greatest gift anyone could buy for another."

That was over 30 years ago, and every Valentine's Day I do think of that, and yes, you can feel sorry for my wife because I am such the romantic.

But every year on this week, I also think it is kind of sad because we have to set aside a week when we feel it is OK to show and share our love. What does that mean? Why do we need to set aside a week or a day to show and share love? Why don't we do that every day and every week?

There was a man who lived over 2,000 years ago and He said this, "By this everyone will know who you are and if you are my disciple, if you have love for one another."

He also said, "You are to love God and love your neighbor as yourself." Then He even said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have life everlasting."

Jesus talked a lot about love and loving one another, and we seem to forget that at times. Loving each other isn't about buying a VCR for someone, it is about respect, and putting someone else's needs before yourself.

So on this week when the world will be talking about love and while you show your love to and for someone else, let us be made aware it is not about what gift we give; it is not about how many Valentine's cards we send or receive; it is not about going out to eat with someone and spending a lot of money. Remember that it is about sharing and caring for others. We don't need Valentine's Day to remind us do we? We can show and share love any time at any place and in so many ways each and every day.

Call someone today to tell them you love them, do something nice for someone else to show them you care, and affirm another person by telling them what they mean to you. That kind of love and respect goes a long way and makes every day Valentine's Day.

An Apostle named Paul wrote many years ago these words, "Now faith, hope and love abide, these three and the greatest of these is love."

The greatest gift we ever give is love, so who will you be giving your love to? I hope it is each and every person you meet. When it really comes down to it, isn't life really about loving one another? Jesus had that figured out a long time ago, and we are still learning that lesson. Let's love one another.

Proverbs 3:5

• PLACES TO WORSHIP • John 3:16

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Rev. Oliver Rice, Pastor (706) 782-3965
Sundays: School - 10 a.m., Worship - 11
Sunday night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7
Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting - 7 p.m.

BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH
828-269-3546
Rev. Jamie Passmore, Pastor
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Catered dinner - Wed. 6pm
CHAPEL OF SKY VALLEY
Sky Valley, GA
Church: 706-746-2999
Sundays: 10 a.m. - Worship
Holy Communion 1st Sunday of the month
Wednesdays: 9 a.m. Healing and Prayer w/Holy Communion

CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH
Rector: Jim Murphy, 252-671-4011
464 US Hwy 64 east, Cashiers
Sun.: Chirstian Education, 9 a.m.(Bucks in Cashiers) Family
Worship with music and Communion, 10:30 a.m.
Mon.: Bible Study & Supper at homes - 6 p.m.
Wed.: Men's Bible Study -8:30 a.m., First Baptist Church

CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY, CASHIERS
Pastor Steve Kerhoulas
Sun.10:45am, S.S 9:30am. Wed. 6pm supper and teaching.
Tue. Guys study 8am, Gals 10am.

CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH
Pastor Jim Kinard
Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 11
Wednesdays -- 7 p.m.

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH
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Senior Pastor Gary Hewins
Sun.: 9:30am: Sunday School
10:30am: Middle & High School; 10:45am: Children's Program.,
10: 45am: Worship Service
Wed.: 5pm Dinner (\$7 adult, \$2 child), 6pm CBC University

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION
Rev. Bruce Walker • 526-2968
Sundays: Holy Eucharist Rite I (chapel), 8 am, Education and choir rehearsal, 9 am, Holy Eucharist Rite II, (sanctuary), 10:30
Wednesday: 10 a.m., Morning Prayer
Thursdays: Holy Eucharist, (chapel), 10 am

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
Dr. Mark Ford, Pastor • 526-4153
Sun.: Worship 10:45 a.m.; School - 9:30 a.m.
Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m., Prayer Meeting - 6:15 p.m., Choir - 5 p.m.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Dr. Lee Bowman, Pastor • 526-3175
Sun.: Worship - 11 a.m.; School - 9:30
Mondays: 8 a.m. - Men's Prayer Group & Breakfast
Wednesdays - Choir - 7

GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH
(Off Franklin/Highlands Rd) • Rev. Carson Gibson

HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD
Randy Reed, Pastor
828-421-9172 • 165 S. Sixth Street
Sundays: Worship - 11

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

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Pastor Paul Christy 526-3376
Sun: School 9:45a.; Worship 9:09 & 10:50.; Youth 5:30 p.
Wed: Supper; 6; 7:15 - children, youth, & adults studies; 6:15 - Adult choir (nursery provided for Wed. p.m. activities)
Thurs:12:30 - Women's Bible Study (nursery)

HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH - ELCA
Chaplain Margaret Howell
2152 Dillard Road - 526-9741
Sundays: Sunday School and Adult discussion group 9:30 a.m.;
Worship/Communion - 10:30

HEALING SERVICE on the 5th Sunday of the month.

MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH
8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in Satolah
Pastor Roy Lowe, (828) 526-8425
Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 11
Choir - 6 p.m.

Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg. - 7 p.m.

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Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg. - 7 p.m.

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

SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH
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Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 11
Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study - 7

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP
85 Sierra Drive • 828-524-6777
Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.
Child Care - 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Religious Education - 11 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
Youth 8th - 12th grades meet the 2nd Sundays 5 - 7:30 p.m

WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers
Sunday School - 10 am, Worship Service - 11 am

...TENURE continued from page 1

in education law and has focused his attention recently in offering legal advice on the changes to the tenure law.

With Macon County Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin and board of education members Jim Breedlove, Tommy Cabe and Gary Shields present at Franklin High School and other board members participating via satellite at Nantahala and Highlands School, Shatley explained different components of the law and answered questions from teachers.

Dr. Baldwin believes the forum helped to answer some questions floating in the minds of local educators. "I thought the meeting went well," said Dr. Baldwin. "Our goal was to provide teachers with quality, unbiased information so that they could make an informed decision regarding the acceptance or declination of the contract provided through the 25 percent legislation. I thought Dean Shatley did an outstanding job of explaining the ramifications and benefits of either choice."

Shatley explained that the legislation changes mean veteran teachers will lose their tenure protections in 2018. Beginning with the current academic year, teachers who haven't worked the four years in a school district needed to qualify for career status were being offered one-year contracts. Teachers who have worked three or more years, are eligible for consideration by local school boards to be a part of 25 percent of teachers who can receive a bonus and a four-year contract if they agree to relinquish their tenure status.

If educators choose to accept the four-year contract, assuming money is available in coming years, teachers stand to receive a bonus totaling \$5,000 in exchange for giving up tenure rights. While the state law directs school districts to pick the best 25 percent of its teachers to offer them the tenure-ending contracts beginning this year, lawmakers did not delegate what criteria to use, which remained the focus of Shatley's information session.

Local districts are charged



A number of Macon County teachers who attended the seminar headed for the stage to make a stand against the 25%/Tenure legislation.

Photo by
Brittany Burns

with developing criteria to identify 25 percent of teachers. The criteria must consider teacher evaluation and performance, but comes with no other requirements. There are no guidelines for comparing a gym teacher to an elementary educator or a guidance counselor to a high school chemistry teacher, all of whom are up for consideration if they have been working in the district for at least three years.

In addition to providing legal advice to teachers regarding the new legislation, Shatley focused his talk on the importance of not pressuring fellow educators to accept or reject the contract. Shatley explained that it is not mandatory for teachers to accept the contract and while it is anyone's right to refuse, it is important not to place pressure on teachers to make a decision.

"You never know what that person you're talking to is going through. Five hundred dollars or \$50 extra a month in the first year—maybe more in the second year—may ultimately be significant to them."

Dr. Baldwin agreed with Shatley and encouraged teachers to respect whatever decision their co-workers may make. "As we move forward with this contract offer there is some concern that undue pressure may be placed on teachers to make a decision one way or another," said Dr. Baldwin.

"I don't want this to happen and neither does the school board."

If all teachers in the district choose to reject the contract offer, the money that would be allocated to 25 percent of eligible Macon County teachers would just be returned to the state, according to Shatley.

Earlier this month, teachers from across the state once again protested the law in the state's capitol, urging lawmakers to reconsider. Some districts in the state are taking drastic measures in hope of sending a message to state lawmakers. Guilford County school board has been in debate over refusing to offer any teachers the contracts. Shatley advises that is a method that should not be taken.

Macon County's Board of Education is expected to narrow down what criteria to use to identify the 25 percent of teachers who will receive the contracts later this month.

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...HEALTH continued from page 1

to better understand the revision of the state's mental healthcare system, so that they can explain their respective policies at the local level.

"A lot was discussed and we still have a lot to work through," said Beale about the meeting. "Basically the state is looking at combining all of its [Local

Management Entities] into just a few larger LMEs, which would be broken up into just four districts throughout the whole state."

The merger of such LMEs (facilities that provide mental health, developmental and substance abuse rehabilitation services) would allow for more efficient use of resources and state fund-

ing, which translates to sustainability, according to a December press release by the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services.

According to the release, the proposed system will establish four regions for the LMEs; one entity in WNC, two in Central N.C. and one in the eastern part of the state. These districts will adhere to geographic contiguity and expect to cover up to 350,000 people per region.

The NCACC formed a 21-member board to further es-

tablish and organize the districts. Beale is among the members.

"We still have a lot of questions to be asked and answered about that," said Beale, who indicated that the Western district will be comprised of 35 counties, from Cherokee to Rockingham counties. "As we formulate going ahead, the state wants the board to work through some of the issues to arise from this merger. For instance, we don't know which entity will be in charge of our district."

But while NCACC board

members are left with the task of doling out the details, those in on the merger proposal are adamant of the move to join forces, which calls for more oversight of increased resources for the state mental healthcare system.

"The consolidation to four LME-MCOs will help create a more sustainable behavioral health system while continuing to improve services through more efficient delivery of care," said Mary Hooper, executive director of the N.C. Council of Community Programs, which represents the LMEs. "We are strongly committed to McCrory's administration's vision of a sustainable Medicaid program that has budget predictability and - most importantly - meets the needs of the people it is responsible for serving in the most integrated way possible."

"We have set clear and high expectations for our LME-MCOs as they have matured this year, asking for more accountability, higher quality and a willingness to evolve by consolidating," NCDHHS Secretary Aldona Wos said at a December Council meeting in Pinehurst. "They have truly stepped up and I appreciate their dedication to making our system stronger."

Beale said that much has yet to be sorted out, including the makeup of each district LME.

"We don't know which entity will be in charge, it's up to the board to make the plan to remedy this," he said. "At these discussions we found that representatives from each LME are very interested in retaining some of the features or services they already have, so we're looking to combine the best of all of the LMEs at the moment. If they have some things working for them, we want to know about it."

The next NCACC meeting will be held in May.

In 2011, the legislature created a plan to move the approximately two billion Medicaid dollars for mental health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and substance abuse into a managed care system by July 1, 2013. This year, the McCrory Administration completed the task of moving the entire state into the managed care model.

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...MILLION continued from page 1

to match my contribution and I believe this new partnership with Mission Health will strengthen our hospital and enhance its capacity to provide exceptional local health care. I hope the community will join me in continuing our strong tradition of philanthropy, so essential to keeping our hospital up-to-date."

Since HCH came into being more than 60 years ago, philanthropy has been the lifeblood of the hospital. Today's Highlands-Cashiers Hospital Foundation was created in 1985 as a supporting organization to HCH through a comprehensive program of promoting and administering charitable contributions. The role of the Foundation will not change under the Mission affiliation, and the Foundation will remain a separate organization with its own local Board of Directors.

"Mission Health very much respects and appreciates Ms. Woodruff's commitment to the community as manifested through this remarkably generous donation and we value the confidence that she has expressed in the new affiliation between Mission and Highlands-Cashiers," said Ronald A. Paulus, MD, president and CEO, Mission Health. "Mission shares Ms. Woodruff's commitment to Highlands-Cashiers and we look forward to working collaboratively to achieve our BIG(GER) Aim together: to get each patient to the desired outcome, first without harm, also without waste and with an exceptional experience for every patient and family. We look forward to partnering with Ms. Woodruff and the Highlands-Cashiers com-

munity to serve this important segment of western North Carolina."

HCH Chairman Charles Sheehan commented: "Jane Woodruff's generous support of our hospital over the years is largely responsible for the fine facilities we have in place. Jane's \$1 million gift to the Hospital Foundation being announced today is tremendously important. It represents her enthusiastic endorsement of the affiliation with Mission and her recognition that community philanthropy must continue to play a major role in financing the hospital going forward. Mission's agreement to match Jane's contribution to the Foundation is a wonderful gesture of support and collaboration. I can't imagine the affiliation getting off to a better start!"

"I am exceedingly grateful to learn of Jane's gift," said Craig James, HCH President and CEO. "As we move forward in our partnership with Mission Health, I anticipate operational improvements that will permit us to rely less on the Foundation for operational support and more for the development of capital projects and new programs and services."

Earle Mauldin has served as chair of the HCH Foundation since 2009. Mr. Mauldin commented: "The treasured asset of a strong, vibrant community hospital cannot be overstated. The Foundation Board is truly excited that Ms. Woodruff has stepped forward with such outstanding support at this important juncture of our organization and that Mission Health has agreed to

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• H-C HOSPITAL NEWS •

FAQs and key messages about H-C Hospital joining Mission

Who will own Highlands-Cashiers Hospital?

As a sole member corporation, Mission Health has the ultimate controlling interest and responsibility for Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Strong local governance is a shared cultural value of the partnership. With Mission Health's focus and mission being solely on serving the people of western North Carolina, maintaining local community healthcare services is a common priority and goal. Being a part of a larger system allows HCH to maintain, enhance and grow local healthcare services for our community. Mission Health is a 501 c 3 non-profit corporation.

How is the governance structured and how will the HCH Board operate?

Maintaining local governance was important to our Hospital Board while developing an affiliation. Under the structured terms of the definitive agreement the HCH Board of Directors will consist of twelve members, nine local and three Mission Health representatives who will provide oversight of our organization. The Board will be comprised initially of 16 directors; the 13 current Community representatives plus three Mission representatives. As the terms of the Community Representatives expire, the HCH Board of Directors will be reduced to 12 members, nine (9) Community Representatives and three (3) Mission representatives. In addition Mission Health has a regional committee, which includes the CEO and board chairman of each local hospital to provide input to the health system.

Who will be employed by Mission Health?

Craig James, the CEO of Highlands-Cashiers Hospital becomes an employee of Mission Health and the rest of the HCH employees will remain HCH staff members.

What kinds of changes will the Hospital experience?

HCH's affiliation provides opportunities to collaborate that would not be possible as a stand-alone hospital. HCH will join Mission Health's BIG(GER) Aim: to get each patient to the desired outcome, first without harm, also without waste and with an exceptional experience for the pa-

tient and family.

- Clinical staff will begin participating in Mission Health's patient care quality and safety improvement initiatives.

- Financial and billing software technology will transition to the Mission Health platform.

- Human Resource functions will be integrated with the Mission Health system.

- Information technology plans for collaborative interoperable systems will ultimately include all member hospital and hospital-owned physician practice.

- All departments will interact with their respective colleagues at other Mission Health member hospitals in the sharing of information and benchmarking best practice opportunities.

Will we have more doctors?

HCH's affiliation provides the opportunity to add or expand access to physicians and clinical services that would not be possible as a stand-alone hospital.

- As a Mission Health member Hospital, HCH will have access to system-wide physician recruiting services. HCH is recruiting a fulltime primary care physician for the Cashiers Medical Center and an additional emergency department physician.

- There will be opportunities for the development of additional physician specialty services through a model in which physicians may rotate between Mission member hospitals, specifically HCH, Angel Medical Center, and Transylvania Regional Hospital. A physicians needs assessment plan will be completed within the initial 120 days following affiliation that will provide more details on these potential new services. A key factor in expanding access will be that these new services can be provided in a safe and efficient manner for our patients.

- Telestroke medicine, virtual diagnostic imaging (now available at HCH) and other remote services will provide access to Mission Health physician specialists without leaving the community.

Will HCH retain the clinical services and employees it now has?

HCH will continue its current clinical core services and will be working with Mission Health and other affiliate hospitals to sustain and expand services to meet the demand for health care services in our

Save the Date!

February 19th Healthy Heart Symposium

Are you at risk for a heart attack? What are the signs and symptoms that you should know? What should you do? Join us February 19th for information that could save your life!

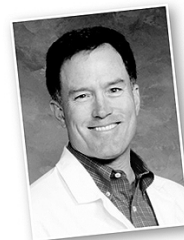
11:00 am

Heart Risk Screening

12:00 noon

Lunch & Learn –

- “Latest Advancements in Cardiac Medicine”, Dr. William Wharton, Board Certified Cardiologist, Asheville Cardiology



1:00 pm

Clinical professionals from HCH and Mission Health will provide the latest information on prevention, detection and treatment of heart disease.

Jane Woodruff Clinic, Level One,
Hospital Campus

Reserve your seat today!
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 **HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS
HOSPITAL**

• BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NEWS •



Mrs. Julie McClellan and 1st grade students with Smokey Bear and Greg Brooks.

Students meet Smokey Bear and participate in poster contest

By Dr. Becky Schilling

In December, two classes at Highlands School learned how to prevent wildfires. The fun started on December 4 when Greg Brooks, District Fire Management Officer of the US Forest Service Nantahala Ranger District, spoke with Julie McClellan's 1st grade students and Andrea Chalker's Great Beginnings K-1 students.

The children learned why Smokey Bear wants to prevent wildfires and what we can do to help. Then Smokey Bear arrived.

By December 19, the 1st grade students had their posters ready to send in to the national contest.

The Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl poster contest has helped students in Grades 1-5 learn about caring for our natural resources since 1961. The contest is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service and National Garden Clubs, Inc. Local support comes from the Mountain Garden Club.

"We're proud of each student who participates in the poster contest," said Bilbro. "Special thanks go to their teachers, and to Greg Brooks and Tyson Stager of the Nantahala Ranger District, for helping these young students learn about Smokey Bear and his message."

State winners in this year's poster contest will be announced in April at The Garden Club of North Carolina meeting in Winston-Salem.

Highlands School has had three state winners in previous years. Smokey Bear posters by Deisy Acevedo Diaz and J. T. Head were the NC 1st grade winners in 2012 and 2013, and the Woodsy Owl poster by Ella Crook was the NC 3rd grade winner in 2013.

Four 2014 scholarship opportunities now available from 'Catch the Spirit of Appalachia' Deadline is March 10

Catch the Spirit of Appalachia supports and encourages youth in honoring and preserving our local Appalachian heritage. Therefore, this year our nonprofit organization wishes to once again provide four opportunities for a scholarship in the amount of \$500 each for "Appalachian Studies," to be presented to four deserving seniors in the western NC counties. Each

scholarship is focused on a different aspect of our Appalachian heritage, and established in honor of someone in our society who has made a difference.

Scholarship # 1—The Annie Lee Bryson Memorial Scholarship—for a student from these counties who has declared a major or minor in Appalachian Studies or related studies with an interest in "tra-



Back Row from left: Willis Willey and Johnny Castellanos. Front Row from left: Eva Montano, Ebert Oreteja, Hillrie Quin and Claude Sullivan.

'Bolivia Water' mission trip

Claude Sullivan, Hillrie Quin and Willis Willey from the First Presbyterian Church of Highlands have just returned from a trip to Bolivia. The main purpose of the trip was to hold the first annual users conference for all of the six current Living Waters for the World (LWW) water systems in Bolivia and two additional systems which will be installed in 2014. In attendance at the conference were 25 participants, Ebert Oreteja, our In-Country Coordinator, Eva Montano, our church nursery attendant, two translators, Claude, Willis and Quin. Ebert and Eva did a magnificent job leading the conference. The agenda covered safe food preparation guidelines, when to use clean bottled water and proper hand washing. We observed the Girl's orphanage water system and entertained the group with a dinner on Wednesday. On Thursday the agenda included a discussion of current successes and other issues led by each community with a working LWW system, Thursday's

agenda also included a trip to see our new warehouse which was built by the Highlands Methodist youth last year and located at the Boy's orphanage that Dr. John Baumrucker founded. Everyone enjoyed the conference and learned a lot from us and from each other. The local Press came so we were on TV that night. Cecilia Duante, a local Dentist and Public Worker, arranged for us to meet with David Garcia, the Governor of the Montero Providence. The Governor arranged for us to meet the Mayor of Fernandez Aliono, who introduced us in a third meeting to two leaders of Chane Magallanes. They are jointly developing a Water Issues Survey, and the Mayor has promised to fund a water building.

While in Bolivia we visited our previous installations in El Chore, Villa Amboro and the hospital in San Juan de Yapacani. At each site we checked the system and discussed unique issues. While in San Juan de Yapacani we also met with the local water cooperative. They too are completing a Water Issues Survey and are willing to build a building and staff a system. The area has very high levels of Manganese and Iron in the water so we are working with the engineers at Living Waters for the World to make sure the water is safe and to reduce the yellow in the water.

A great trip was had by all, with the exception of the time Willis had to walk two miles from the airport carrying his suitcase in the pouring rain to get around a blockade ... it is Bolivia!

ditional crafts."

Scholarship # 2— The Mary Jane Queen Memorial Scholarship—the committee will select students who have declared a major or minor in music, with an interest in the traditional music of the Appalachian mountains.

• See SCHOLARSHIPS page 21

HCP's 'Weekend Comedy' opens Feb. 20 at PAC

One of the most delightful aspects of enjoying community theater is watching your neighbors undertake the job of acting onstage. Highlands Cashiers Players has a large reserve of talent from which to choose, but is always searching for new faces to join their ranks. Weekend Comedy, which opens February 20, features both new and familiar faces.

The play is about two couples who have, through a mistake by a rental agent, reserved the same mountain cottage in upstate New York. Frank and Peggy are in their mid-50s and have been married for 23 years. They are thrown together with Tony and Jill, young, unmarried, and living the good life. All starts well, but the differences in age and lifestyles lead to inevitable friction.

Many will recognize Rick Siegel as Frank and Robin Phillips as Peggy. Rick and his wife Helene have been residents

of Highlands since 1997 when they bought, what is now, the 4 1/2 Street Inn. Rick is not only acting in, but directing, Weekend Comedy – a daunting task at which he excels. Siegel has appeared on stage in numerous HCP productions and directed the fan favorite, “Dixie Swim Club.”

Robin Phillips plays Frank's wife Peggy, and finds Peggy's tolerance of Frank's attitude and antics endearing. Phillips has lived in Highlands full time for five years. Her first involvement with Highlands Cashiers Players was the play, “Rumors,” and she has enjoyed both on stage and back stage involvement since. Robin has recently starred in “Love, Loss and What I Wore” and has been a godsend to HCP.

Handsome Tony is being played by newcomer, Kevin Murphy of Franklin. Although Murphy is relatively new to the Highlands Cashiers Players, he has many years of stage experience under his belt.

Having grown up in Decatur, GA Kevin got his first taste of theater in high school. He later attended SCAD (Savannah College of Art and Design) and graduated with a degree in Performing Arts. Weekend Comedy will be Murphy's third HCP production and he will be assistant director for their next play.

Taylor Crawford plays Tony's wife, Jill. Although she is the youngest member of the cast, Crawford is not a newcomer. Having worked with Dr. Ronnie Spilton in the Youth Theater classes for five years, Taylor has been seen on stage in many productions, most recently in “Love, Loss and What I Wore.” Taylor is a senior at Blue Ridge School in Cashiers.

Weekend Comedy opens February 20th at the Highlands PAC. For ticket information please contact them at 828-526-8084.

Democrat precinct meeting is Tues., March 4 at the Civic Center

The Highlands Precinct of the Macon County Democrat Party will have the annual Precinct Meeting on Tuesday March 4 at 6 PM at the Highlands Civic Center (Rec Park). All registered Democrats are urged to attend. An opening Social will begin at 5:30 PM (refreshments provided) and will continue after the meeting until 7:30 PM. You do not have to notify a precinct officer, but do put this important meeting on your calendar and plan to attend.

...MISSION continued from page 17

community. This will ensure the need for employment of qualified medical professionals, technologists and employees.

What about the Foundation?

The HCH Foundation will not change and will remain a separate organization with its own local Board of Directors. The Chair of the HC-Hospital Board will serve on the Foundation Board and the Chair of the Foundation Board will serve on the Hospital Board. Philanthropy will continue to play a key role in the Hospital's ability to sustain and expand its scope of services, facilities and equipment. All Foundation assets and donations will be stewarded by the HCH Foundation Board of Directors to benefit the patients and communities served by Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. While it is anticipated that our Mission Health affiliation will help to improve HCH's financial performance, the need for supporting the hospital's operations, physician practices, and capital needs will continue.

What are the projected financial improvements?

Through economies of scale, insurance and reimbursement contracts, management support and access to corporate services, it is projected that HCH will improve its financial performance by approximately \$600,000 in the first 12 months.

What will the Foundation Focus be?

The Foundation will continue to provide essential funding support for Hospital and physician services as well as capital needs. We will continue our “Campaign for Community HealthCare Excellence” to raise \$20 million for three areas of support: 1) Hospital and Physician Clinics day-to-day services 2) Capital equipment and facility improvements 3) Endowment.

To date there are more than 1,400 generous donors who have contributed more than \$13.5 million over the past three and a half years toward this initiative. It is no exaggeration to say that for a small community, this is truly remarkable and speaks loudly for the importance of the local Hospital in the lives of our surrounding families.

As the partnership with Mission Health evolves, HCH anticipates less reliance on the Foundation for funding operations and more emphasis on funding the development of new programs and capital initiatives to serve the healthcare needs of our local communities.

What about the ELC (Eckerd Living Center)?

At this time there are no changes to the operations of the Eckerd Living Center (ELC). The Board of Directors, in collaboration with Mission Health and the ELC/Hospital leadership team, will evaluate governance and organizational structures that could improve the financial operation of both the ELC and Hospital. The objective is to determine the best possible model for our residents and their families. The com-

mon goals of meeting the health care needs of the community as well as strong local governance will be a priority throughout this evaluation process.

Will patients see a decrease

in costs for services, i.e., procedures, tests, doctor visits, etc.?

We're focusing first on the integration with the system and enhancing the level of care.

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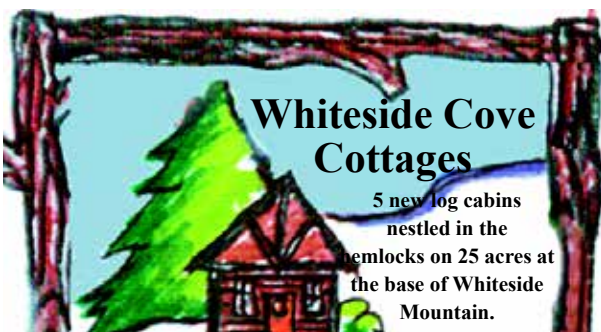
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...SCHOLARSHIPS continued from page 18

Scholarship # 3—The Elmer & Irene Hooper Memorial Scholarship—the committee is looking for high school seniors who have demonstrated excellence in volunteerism and leadership and who are committed to making a difference in the community.

Scholarship # 4—The Founders Scholarship—a scholarship awarded on the basis of merit or potential within the visual arts, writing or history, with consideration of financial need.

• FIRE REPORTS •

The Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries from Jan. 31

Jan. 31

- At 8:04 a.m., the dept. responded to a vehicle accident on US 64 west at Bust Your Butt Falls. There were no injuries.
- At 8:39 a.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to the Cashiers Fire Department for a chimney fire on Heady Mountain.
- At 5:25 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to Main Street where a person had fallen.

Feb. 1

- At 9:08 p.m., the dept. responded to a chimney fire on Bear Vista Drive. There was no damage.

Feb. 2



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Applicants must submit completed application and all supporting documents to the Guidance Counselor of the applicant's school by March 10, 2014 in order to be considered for this year's scholarship awards. Home schooler applicants should complete the application and send it to CSA, 29 Regal Avenue, Sylva, NC 28779 by March 10, 2014. The application packet may be downloaded by going to our website: www.spiritofappalachia.org or for more information, call 828-631-4587.

• At 11:18 p.m., the dept. responded to a vehicle accident on Clear Creek Road. There were no injuries.

Feb. 5

- At 12:41 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. It was false.
- At 12:46 p.m., the dept. responded to a CO2 alarm at a residence on Spring Street.
- At 2:44 p.m., the dept. responded to a transformer fire at a residence on Mirror Lake Road.
- At 11:23 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to Cashiers Fire Department on a structure fire.

Feb. 6

• At 8:51 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on 3 R Lane.

Feb. 7

- At 4:13 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Walkingstick Road. It was false.
- At 7:54 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to Cashiers Fire Department for a chimney fire.

Feb. 8

• At 4:02 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Cable Place.

Feb. 9

- At 12:57 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Shadow Circle Lane.
- At 6:11 p.m., the dept. responded to a medical alarm activation at a residence on Clear Creek Road.

Feb. 10

• At 1:04 p.m., the dept. responded to a medical alarm activation at a residence on Harbinson Orchard Road.

• At 7:45 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Bowery Road.

Feb. 11

- A little after midnight, the dept. provided medical transport at a residence on Crescent Trail.
- At 10:11 a.m., the dept. responded to a call about a vehicle accident on US 64 east but nothing was found.
- At 11:49 a.m., the dept. responded to a call about a possible chimney fire at a residence on NC 106.

Ginseng root poacher sentenced to jail time

U.S. Magistrate Judge Dennis L. Howell sentenced Charles R. Nash, of Whittier, N.C. to serve 10 days in jail for the illegal possession or harvesting of American ginseng from the Nantahala National Forest, announced Anne M. Tompkins, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina and Kristin Bail, Forest Supervisor of the U.S. Forest Service National Forests in North Carolina.

According to the January 30, 2014 sentencing hearing and other documents, on October 12, 2013, Nash admitted to illegally possessing 24 American ginseng roots he had

• See **GINSENG** page 22

• CLASSIFIEDS •

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...GINSENG continued from page 21

dug from the Moses Creek and Wayehutta Off-Road Vehicle areas in Jackson County. He pleaded guilty to the poaching charge. Staff of the Forest Service replanted the recovered viable roots.

American ginseng is on the list of the Convention of International Trade of Endangered Species. The U.S. Attorney's Office reminds the public that gathering ginseng on the Nantahala National Forest without a permit is illegal. U.S. Forest Service lands have been severely impacted by ginseng poachers in western North Carolina. American ginseng was formerly abundant throughout the eastern mountains, but due to repeated poaching, populations have been reduced to a point that they can barely reproduce. The roots poached in this park are usually young, between the ages of 5 and 10 years, and have not yet reached their full reproductive capacity. In time, the plant's populations could recover if poaching ceased.

The Division of Scientific Authority,

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is the regulatory agency that evaluates the biological and management status of wild American ginseng throughout its native range. The Division issues an annual or biennial report detailing if any harvest conditions need to be modified to ensure the sustainable harvest of wild native ginseng. Permits to collect ginseng root in National Forests are issued through the U.S. Forest Service in early September. Permits are not available in National Park lands such as the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, where even the possession of American Ginseng is prohibited.

The investigation of the case was handled by the U.S. Forest Service. The U.S. Attorney's Office in Asheville handled the prosecution.

To report illegal harvesting activities of American ginseng, please call 828-257-4200.

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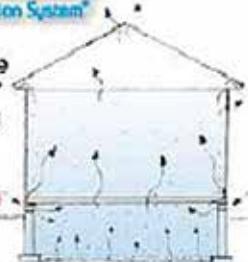
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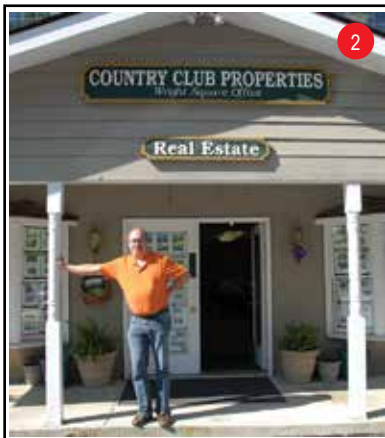
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