

Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., Jan 16, 2014

BOE struggles with state-mandated requirements

Generates list of those eligible for contract/raise offer

North Carolina public school teachers are being put to the test, literally. New legislation requires them to administer yet another test, this time for 3rd

graders whose results may or may not reflect on their competency as teachers.

"Our teachers are having to spend valuable time teaching stu-

dents to test rather than focusing on curriculum and learning," said BOE member Stephanie McCall. "This is not 'in the best interest of our students' or our teachers."

To add insult to injury, by April, superintendents in the state's 115 local school boards and that of the Cherokee Nation, must decide what 25% of their

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MC BOE joins lawsuit against private school voucher system

At an emotionally charged special called Macon County Board of Education meeting last Thursday, board members voted unanimously to join as plaintiffs in pending litigation challenging the constitutionality of the private school voucher system which is to take effect for the 2014-'15 school year.

Mid-December 2013, a lawsuit was filed in Wake County Superior Court challenging the constitutionality of legislation passed earlier in 2013 that creates a private school voucher program using public funds.

Under the legislation, a private school can receive up to \$4,200 in public funding for each eligible student that it enrolls.

The legislation does not require that a student be struggling academically or attend a poorly performing public school in order to receive a voucher.

It also does not require any assurance that public funds will

be spent to provide students with an adequate education and one that is offered on a non-discriminatory basis.

"Basically, the NC School Board Association, (NCSBA) of which Macon County is a part, is asking all school systems to sign as co-plaintiffs at no cost to them," explained BOE attorney John Henning, Jr. "This is a voucher system by which private educational entities are funded with taxpayer dollars which represents a reduction in the public school fund. Private schools have no oversight by the state education board; can select who they want to; discriminate on any basis they see fit; teach whatever they feel they ought to teach and our tax dollars are now going to fund this through the voucher system."

The suit was filed by four individual taxpayers, three of whom have children attending public schools, and the NCSBA, a non-profit, nonpartisan membership association that represents all 115 local boards of education in the state and the Board of Education of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation.

"This means \$10 million will be allocated the first year, \$40 million the next year with no oversight at the state level," said MC Schools Superintendent Dr. Chris

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After 50 years, Bob says good-bye

In the course of his 76 years, Bob Houston has retired from three entities but it's the Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. that's held him the longest and it will likely be the hardest stint for him to relinquish.

But after 50 years of service, Bob says it's time ... time for the younger generation to take over

and time for him to find something else to do.

After he finished an eight-year tour with the air force December 1963, he came home to Highlands and joined the other 22 Highlands Fire & Rescue (HF&R) volunteers in January 1964.

He is the longest standing

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SOTCH examines pros and cons of citizens' health trends

Macon County Public Health recently issued Macon County's State of the County's Health Report (SOTCH) for the calendar year of 2013.

The purpose of this report is to inform community members, leaders, and organizations about Macon County's progress on certain health issues. It also provides the most current data on a number of leading health indicators such as: county demographics, leading causes of death, chronic disease mortality, access to care, and health promotion.

The SOTCH Report highlights the county's achievements and set-backs realized during the year in relation to the three health priorities identified in the 2012 Comprehensive Community Health Assessment. These priorities included reducing the incidence of chronic diseases related to obesity; reducing the incidence and mortality rates associated with breast, colorectal, and lung cancers; and promoting the recruitment and retention of primary care physicians and dentists.

A number of positive outcomes were noted in the 2013

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •



Highlands Mayor
Pat Taylor

As your mayor I will be writing a brief column before each monthly Town Board meeting to update citizens on the agenda, issues and activities the Town Board will review. The updates will cover the major issues that will be on the meeting agenda.

The next meeting of the board will be on Thursday, January 16th, at 7pm. Meetings are held at the Community Building next to the ball field. There is a public comment period at the beginning of each meeting. It is requested that comments be held to under five minutes. Any requests for the board to take action will be taken under advisement for future meetings.

A major item of the agenda will be the presentation of the town audit by the Martin Starnes Accounting Firm. This company is one of the few companies in North Carolina that specializes in municipal audits. The audit was begun in October. It is anticipated that the town will have a clean audit with no major problems. Not only has the town financials been audited by an independent accounting firm, the audit has also been reviewed by the North Carolina Local Government Commission. If their experts had found discrepancies or problems, the commission would require the town to explain why there was a problem and what would be the plan for correction.

The Local Government Commission is a watchdog agency charged with making sure cities and towns account for the expenditures of taxpayer monies. The commission has the authority to intervene and prohibit unsound expenditures or loans made by municipalities. In summary, residents should know there are checks and balances in place when it comes to your town finances.

The board will also address the proposed budget schedule for the coming fiscal year. We are moving into the season of budget planning and review. In the coming months there will be a pub-

lic town retreat session where upcoming needs and priorities will be discussed by staff and board members. The retreat will be followed by a series of budget meetings that examine specific department budgets, line items and capital improvement projects.

Another agenda item will be a request from a consortium of nonprofit groups requesting board permission to raise private funds to complete the development plan for Kelsey Hutchinson Park. In a related matter Thomas Craig will be requesting permission to use the park for the summer concert series that was initiated last summer.

We will also review a request to extend the Main Street Parking Restrictions into December. Also, amendment to the unified development ordinance will be presented, along with a zoning request for all town-owned properties to be zoned Governmental/Institutional. Currently, there are small town properties, for example the locations of water tanks, that are in other zoning districts. This change is basically a

housekeeping procedure to create a consistent zoning map.

Board vacancies and appointments will be reviewed at this session, too. The proposed lettering on police cars will also

...BOB continued from page 1

member of the organization – which includes active duty from which he retired in 1987 and the part-time administrative role he's held since.

This past August, HF&R celebrated its 60th birthday, so Bob has been a part of most of its history.

The changes he's seen over 50 years include changes in venue, technology, equipment, training requirements, service area (which used to include Cashiers since it didn't have a fire department or an ambulance) and the number of volunteers. The force has grown from 23 to 30.

"When I got on the force we had the old 1953 FWD fire truck, an old ambulance, which was the first in town; we didn't have any turnout gear, air packs or pagers

be presented.

I am happy to answer questions. Feel free to call me at 526-2118, or my cell phone (828) 506-3138, or email me at Mayor@highlandsn.org

and we relied on the fire whistle to sound the alarm and rally the members," said Bob.

Until the mid-1980s, HF&R was also the EMS service in town. The county took over EMS calls after that and the department didn't start wearing its first-responder hat until about 15 years ago. Nowadays, first-responder calls represent the department's largest number of calls.

Fifty years ago, the fire department was housed in the center of the current Town Hall building – it later moved to the building on Oak Street which was mostly constructed by the volunteers themselves.

Now the department has 10 trucks, (5 pumper tankers, one ladder, two rescue trucks and 2 utility vehicles – not including cars for the Chief and Assistant Chief and the old FWD fire truck).

There are also more than 30 sets of new turnout gear on hand, 20 air packs, and of course the department is now governed by state and OSHA regulations.

"Before OSHA we would grab our turnout gear and sometimes not even put it on, and hang on to the back of the truck on the way to a call," said Bob. "Now you can't ride on back of a truck; you have to be in cab or in another vehicle. There was no mandatory training – just a first aid course – now first-responders have to take 12 hours of training per year." Firefighters must also take 36 hours of training per year.

After serving as Assistant Chief under Chief Jimmy Talley, who was chief from 1967 to 1975, Bob was elected Chief and served in that capacity from 1976 to 1983.

The biggest search and rescue call came in the spring of 1968 when four-year-old Cinda Schweers went missing from the Bowery Road area.

"That call came in Wednesday night during a Town Board meeting [Bob was a commissioner then] and it lasted until Sunday. We set up a tent camp in the field on Bowery Road opposite the Monroe house," he said. Tragically, Schweers was found drowned in a lake in Horse Cove.

The largest blaze, though not the most tragic in terms of lives lost, was the

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• OBITUARIES •

Gladys Burnette Woodruff

Gladys Burnette Woodruff of Alfred Station, NY, died on Friday, Dec. 20, 2013.

Born in Scaly Mountain, NC on August 12, 1924, she resided in North Carolina until her marriage to William Woodruff of Alfred Station NY. He was known to most by Woody).

Her parents were John and Marry Burnette of Scaly Mountain, NC. She attended Scaly Mountain Grammar School, graduated from Highlands High School and Brevard College in Brevard, NC. After graduation she was employed as a secretary in the Ecusta Paper Plant in Brevard, NC.

Following her marriage in 1946, she moved to Alfred Station, NC where she lived until her death. One sister, Louise Miller and her husband Woody preceded her in death. Remaining are sons John and wife Deborah of Pollock, LA; James and wife Patty of Muncy, PA; and Richard who is still living in the family home in Alfred Station.

Also surviving are two grandchildren and one great grandchild. She is also survived by three sisters: Joyce and husband Ralph Wetmore of Deland, FL; Jan and husband Harce Cornelius of East Bend, NC and Virginia and husband Joe Petree of Oak Ridge, NC, and a host of friends everywhere.

She was a very faithful member of the Alfred Station Seventh Day Baptist Church as well as a member and past matron of the Kanakadea McArthur #242 Order of the Eastern Star in Alfred Station.

Besides her family and friends, she loved walking, gardening and especially animals – her cats and dogs the most.

Information provided by Virginia Petree, 5736 Bunch Road, Oak Ridge, NC, 27310.

Former harness driver Sam O'Neill, brother of racetrack vet, dead at 76

(Dr. Bob O'Neill is a second-home owner in Highlands)

Sam O'Neill, a retired Standardbred trainer and driver and brother of South Florida racetrack equine practitioner Bob O'Neill, died in Montevideo, Uruguay, on Christmas Day. He was 76 years old.

Mr. O'Neill raced in the 1960s through the '80s at Pompano Park in Florida and other racetracks around the country, including Batavia, Meadows, Northfield and Detroit.

"He was a multimillionaire three times and broke three times," Bob O'Neill said of his brother. "He was involved in women's fashion business, the equine veterinary supply business, and the (human) shoe business. When he was driving Standardbreds he had a 30-acre farm north of Pompano."

O'Neill said his brother's daughter, Kim O'Neill and ex-wife Faye were visiting him in Montevideo, where he'd retired two years ago. They discovered his body on the floor early Christmas morning, and an autopsy is determining whether he fell and struck his head or suffered a heart attack.

"He had two cats - Sammy and Bobby - and Sammy woke them up," he said. "That's when they found him."

"He enjoyed riding his motorcycle, smoking fine cigars and drinking good whiskey," said O'Neill, who serves as chairman of the Florida Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners.

Sam O'Neill also had a son, who preceded him in death. There are no plans for a funeral service.

Martha Munger Owens

Martha Munger Owens, 73 of the Satolah Community died at her residence Friday, January 10, 2014. She was born March 22, 1940 in Macon County, the daughter of the late William Jesse and Lona Crane Munger. Martha was a loving wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She loved gardening, canning and spending time with her family and was a member of Highlands First Baptist Church. Surviving are her husband of 57 years, Jayco Owens,



three daughters, Mary Owens Ridgeway (Steve) of Anderson, SC, Melissa Grace (Brian) of Highlands, NC and Sherry Owens of Highlands, NC; five sons, James Owens of Highlands, NC, Bennie Owens (Frankie) of Highlands, NC, Gene Owens (Stacy) of Satolah, GA, Dennis Owens (Sandra) of Highlands, NC and Johnny Owens (Marcy) of Satolah, GA, four brothers, Fred Munger (Madge) of Highlands, NC, Jim Munger (Peggy) of Franklin, NC, Andy Munger

(Gail) of Seneca, SC and John Munger (Freida) of Satolah, GA. 16 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren also survive.

She was preceded in death by a sister, Ann Holly and a brother Gene Munger. Funeral services were held Monday, January 13, 2014 in Macedonia Baptist Church with Rev. Oliver Rice and Rev. Clinton Owens officiating. Burial was in the church cemetery. Pallbearers were Frank Lowery, Ben

Owens, D. J. Owens, Stephen Owens, Joey Owens and Brian Grace. Honorary pallbearers were Jacob Owens, Jamie Grace, John Paul Grace, Talon Lowery, Randall McCall, Billy Ottaway and Steve Ridgeway. Memorial donations may be made to Bryant-Grant Funeral Home, 105 West Main St. Franklin, NC 28734 to help with expenses.

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• HIGHLANDS DINING •

...HEALTH from page 1

SOTCH Report:

- Impacts from the Community Transformation Project included increased access to healthy foods at farmer's markets and food stands as well as the implementation of a region-wide Health Impact Assessment.
- Expansions of local worksite wellness programs at Franklin area employers.
- Expansions of nutrition counseling and education services at Macon County Public Health.
- Launch of the Eat Smart, Move More, Faithful Families initiative at area churches.
- Expansion of breastfeeding resources including a new Certified Lactation Educator at Angel Medical Center, a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor at Macon County Public Health, and a breast pump loan program at Macon County Public Health.
- Increased community awareness of the 5-2-1-Almost None initiative. 5-2-1-Almost None promotes eating 5 fruits and vegetables every day; getting no more than 2 hours of "screen time" per day; engaging in 1 hour of physical activity/day; and drinking almost no sugary drinks.

A concern identified in the report cited continued financial insecurity of the Franklin Community Care Clinic (a non-profit organization that provides health care for financially eligible, uninsured patients). Long-term operating funds, qualified medical staffing, and volunteers were identified as resources needed to keep this clinic operational. Acute and emergency care facilities in the county may see an increased demand for services from clients without a payer source if the clinic cannot sustain operations. In addition, many uninsured residents may find it increasingly difficult to get needed medical care. Another concern addressed by the report included non-payment to medical providers by NC TRACS. This lack of payment has resulted in some area medical providers no longer treating Medicaid patients.

In addition to noting these areas of progress and challenges, the SOTCH report also identified several potential emerging health issues that the public health center and other health care providers are monitoring. These emerging health issues included suicide, rabies, lead in groundwater, gonorrhea, and e-cigarettes.

An increase in suicide deaths in Macon County was the first emergent issue identified. Suicide deaths in Macon County have risen from two in 2010, to four in 2011, to 13 in 2012.

A second emergent issue was identified as lead contamination in private wells constructed using galvanized metal components. Specifically, Macon County Environmental Health has identified that an estimated 10%-12% of Macon County wells have high rates of lead, which may be attributable to the use of galvanized pipe and/or pump components.

Rabies control was targeted as the third emerging health issue. Although no Macon County animals have tested positive for rabies in recent years, rabies has been identified in all counties surrounding Macon.

A fourth issue that is being monitored is the rate of locally acquired gonorrhea. Until this year, most cases of gonorrhea among Macon County residents were found to be acquired from partners outside Macon County. In 2012 the health department's disease surveillance system

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...VOUCHER continued from page 1

Baldwin. "There has been some indication that the purpose behind this legislation is to promote competition between public schools and private schools and that will somehow improve education. I don't buy into that argument, but if you do buy into that argument, let's make the competition a level playing field with the same levels of accountability and oversight. Furthermore, the money going to the private schools should be at the same level we have at the public schools."

Shearra Miller, president of the NC-SBA and a member of the Cleveland County BOE said the challenge raises important questions about the use of public funds and the state's commitment to North Carolina's students

"By diverting funding from the public schools, vouchers have the potential to significantly damage individual school systems, particularly in smaller districts. As a local board member, I am concerned about the impact this will have on our students," she said. "In addition, the voucher program does not ensure that the private schools that receive public funding will adhere to our constitution's promise that students will have the opportunity to receive a sound basic education and will not face discrimination. Given all of these issues, the NCSBA Board of Directors felt strongly that the organization should raise these questions in court."

Henning said the basis of the lawsuit is that the voucher system enacted by the General Assembly is unconstitutional and the goal is to have it declared so; one reason being that the voucher program created in the budget bill uses public funds for a non-public purpose, which is in violation

of the N.C. Constitution

In addition, the complaint asserts that the legislation violates the state constitution by:

- Using public dollars for a non-public purpose-private education opportunities outside of the constitutionally required "general and uniform system of free public schools;"

- Failing to require participating private schools to adhere to any substantive educational standards or practice non-discriminatory admissions; Diverting public dollars from the State School Fund, which is to be used "exclusively for establishing and maintaining a uniform system of public schools;" and

- Creating a system of selective secondary educational opportunities that denies students equal opportunities.

Chairman Jim Breedlove said by deciding to sign on now, Macon County Schools will be listed on the original complaint as one of the initial systems against this.

The legislation indicates the General Assembly's intent to increase annual appropriations for the program to \$50 million per year; While the voucher program requires the State Board of Education to reduce funding to each local board of education in an amount equal to the local board's per pupil allocation for average daily membership multiplied by the number of students who have received vouchers and were enrolled in the local board's schools during the prior semester.

"It's not fair to the students of Macon county or the schools of Macon County, therefore I support this resolution," said Baldwin.

— Kim Lewicki

...HEALTH continued from page 4

identified that gonorrhea was now being acquired from local partners.

Lastly, the increasing use of e-cigarettes was identified as an emerging health issue. The report points out that the use of e-cigarettes required monitoring due to the potential for nicotine addiction, the potential spread of communicable diseases through exhaled water vapor, and the potential to use e-cigarettes as a way to "smoke" wax and liquid based cannabis.

Macon County Public Health values the public's input, questions, and comments about the SOTCH Report as well as the Community Health Assessment process. If you would like to make comments or ask questions about any of these reports, please contact Macon County Public Health at 349-2437. In addition, Macon County Public Health maintains a comprehensive collection of community

health resources. These resources include demographic data; local, state, and federal health status information; information about health programs and services available to Macon County residents, and a variety of reports, like the SOTCH, the Community Health Assessment, and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. All of this information is available free of charge for the public to view. Access to many of these resources is also available online at <http://www.maconnc.org/healthy-carolinians.html>.

**In honor of Martin Luther King Jr.
Day, USFS fees to Whitewater Falls
and Whiteside Mountain will be
waived on Jan. 20, 2014.**

• INVESTING AT 4,118 Ft. •

The Polar Vortex

By Jeannie Chambers
The Chambers Agency Realtors

Don't you just love the new media buzz word/phrase? Yeah; me either. When I first heard it, visions of Dorothy's house in The Wizard of Oz came to mind, except of course there were icicles hanging off Toto's nose. I prefer a different phrase 'cold snap.' I know Polar Vortex sounds more cinema worthy, but cold snap hits us where we are, and snap is what happens sometimes; to tree limbs, power lines, plumbing lines, and yes, even fingernails.

From what I've read, Polar Vortex is nothing new; the term has been used since 1853. Polar cyclones hover over the Arctic in winter all the time, but when the stratosphere has a dramatic change in temperature, it makes the cyclone 'polar vortex' get stronger resulting in colder

temperatures. It was just plain C.O.L.D.

How did your home fare in our last cold snap? From what some of our local plumbers have said, we really won't know until everything thaws. Homes normally protected by leaving heat on and turning the water off 'at the street' may not have been enough for some homes.

According to the frost line map provided by the International Code Council (ICC), the depth to have water pipes covered in our area is 18 inches, but the NC building code lists the depth at a minimum of 12 inches. However, with the temperatures we've just seen, neither of those basic requirements may have been enough.

Whether you are looking to buy a home in this area, or have your home listed for sale, or are renting your home out to others,

you must take the necessary precautions to keep your home safe in all kinds of weather. No one is immune to the possible hazards of freakish weather, but we can lessen the severity by taking these proactive steps.

1) Leave some heat on in your home – it doesn't have to be

a 'livable temperature,' 40-50 degrees.

2) Have an alternative heat source as a back up plan. If the power goes out and you don't have an automatic generator, your home may freeze. Even if the power doesn't fail, if the condensation line of your furnace freeze-

es, the furnace will not work.

3) Turn the water supply to your home off while away in the winter. If your pipes freeze, at least you won't have endless amounts of water flooding inside your home. Some homes have a turn off valve in the base-

• See INVESTING page 14

• REAL ESTATE SNAPSHOTS •

Falling Waters is a 52-acre community



A peaceful sanctuary tucked in the mountains just 2.8 miles from Main Street, Highlands, NC. Secluded but not remote. Well forested with mature hardwoods, Rhododendron, Mountain Laurel and wild flowers that take turns showing off through the seasons; two waterfalls & several creeks. Gentle land, easy building sites, and a great place to take a walk.

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Historic Highlands Estate



Escape to this historic, 1920s Highlands estate and luxuriate in privacy on 7.27 +/- acres, with an easy walk to Main Street. The 4 BR/3 BA main house features gorgeous woodwork, largest fireplace in the living & dining rooms, large country kitchen, laundry/mud room, and library. The charming, 2BR/1 BA guest house has wood floors throughout, a claw foot tub/shower in the bathroom, and an open deck. Now REDUCED and offered at \$1,950,000, MLS #75971.



Susie deVille,
Broker-in-Charge
susie@WhiteOakRG.com

In-Town Home w/Stream



The in-town location, w/1.8 acres and bubbling stream, make this beautifully-maintained 2BR/3.5BA with Porte-cochere, w/room for 2 cars & circular driveway, give an inviting first impression. Spacious rooms, including chef's kitchen with island, fireplace, vaulted ceilings & massive bonus rooms downstairs. Room for a third bedroom downstairs. Wired for elevator from office area to basement. Incredible bonus space on the lower level. Offered at \$315,000, MLS #75355.

Mountain Views & Easy Walk to Lake



You will LOVE this cottage! Updated and renovated, this Mirror Lake area 3BR/3BA home features hardwood, tile, and carpet flooring; vaulted ceiling and wood burning fireplace in the living room; loft with office area; expansive decking (open & covered); spacious master's suite with fireplace, sitting area, wet bar, and access to the deck and hot tub; great mountain view; and paved access. Furnishings are negotiable! Offered at \$375,000, MLS #77862.

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...BOE continued from page 1

teachers are eligible for a 4-year contract and \$500 merit raise each year for four years – with the understanding that they won't be eligible for tenure and if they have it they must give it up.

Without state-mandated criteria to go by, MC Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin and his staff are trying to come up with a

way that is neither arbitrary nor capricious to select the 68 teachers to whom they will offer the 4-year contract.

Believing teacher input is important regarding selection criteria, a teacher survey was administered asking for selection criteria priorities and comments.

Of the 272 teachers eligible for the

contract, 121 participated in the survey. They listed Priority #1 as offering the contract to beginner teachers, who have not received a raise in six years, and those near retirement.

For Priority #2 was Test Data, in other words, gains made by their students during testing, should be considered since the teachers are seen as being largely responsible for student test scores.

Priority #3 was professionalism, considered by the administration the hardest criteria to define.

Interestingly, when asked what factors should not be considered as criteria 37% said Test Data. Baldwin said not all career teachers have test data in the resume, for instance, physical education, art and music teachers don't administer state-mandated tests like academic teachers.

To be eligible for the 4-year contract offer, a licensed teacher or instructional support educator must have taught in the MC School System for at least three consecutive years as of Sept. 1, 2013, with ratings of "proficient" or higher on their annual evaluations. Among that pool of eligible educators only 25% can be selected and offered the contract and salary increase.

When asked if they planned to reject the contract offer, 70% (95) of teachers who participated in the survey said they planned to reject the offer; 27% (36) said they weren't sure yet and 3% (4) said they would accept.

BOE member Gary Shields suggested the teachers take the contract offer.

"I would say to them, 'take the money; take the contract, we need you.' They represent our most qualified teachers and are the lowest paid. Why not take it for four more years?," he said. "We don't know how this is going to spin out and right now it is the only way we are allowed to offer a 4-year contract."

The reason behind the legislation is to get rid of the tenure system, for which teachers are eligible their fourth year of teaching. Those with tenure, which entitles holders to due process concerning their employment, are safe until 2018. If they choose to take the contract and raise offer, they must relinquish their tenure.

"No one in the district thinks this is a good idea," said BOE Attorney John Henning, Jr. "But to stay within the bounds of the law, we as a district don't have any choice but to select that 25% of teachers and make the offer."

According to Baldwin, 100% of teachers in two schools have said they are opting out of the offer and they don't want to be considered.

"If everyone we offer this to turns it down, I think that would be a fine thing for our teachers to do," said Henning. "But we must still come up with the list and make

the offers and then we're done."

Now the district must decide what criteria to use; whether to make it a "by level" random selection process - elementary, middle or high; or a lottery.

Dan Moore, director of personnel said the following comment concerning the entire predicament hits the nail on the head.

"There is no good way to determine who is a better teacher over someone else. Some of us are responsible for producing test scores, others are responsible for promoting physical, creative and emotional health. It takes all of us to create a successful learning environment. Any criteria you develop will divide us and cause resentment. Principals are in the best position to select their top teachers but that will destroy a school. Even a random lottery will cause resentment but it is at least random. With any luck we will all opt out and not force our leaders to choose one teacher over another."

"That is a very profound statement and I would think that most of the educators and administrators agree with it 100%," said Moore.

Baldwin said he is concerned about the culture and climate of MC Schools next year particularly for the teachers who accept the contract when there are so many who have said they will reject it.

Since the administration doesn't feel well enough informed to tell teachers what they should do with their career status, within the next three weeks, Attorney Chris Campbell, from the National School Board Association will be coming to Macon County to speak to educators to explain ramifications.

This one-time deal is being offered for the 2014-'15 school. Honoring the 4-year contract will cost the state \$10 million the first year, \$20 million the second year, \$40 million the third year, and \$80 million the fourth year.

Moore said the legislature is not allowed to earmark funds for future legislators. "After next year, we don't know what will happen," he said.

"If we vote people in with some common sense this won't come back again," said McCall.

BOE Chairman Jim Breedlove said this is the most divided thing ever forced on the Macon County school system.

"Our superintendent is doing everything he can to be as impartial as he can. He is going to give us a list and we can either approve or decline it, which will undoubtedly cause division between teachers. We are being dealt an impossible situation."

At the February meeting Baldwin

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...BOB continued from page 2

fire at the 100-year-old Lee's Inn the fall of 1982 after it had closed for the season.

"I was at the station when the call came in – I could see it burning. When I got there, Mayor John Cleaveland was there and all he said was "Save the town ... Save the town."

Two other area fire departments responded – Franklin and Satolah; the Lee's Inn call was their first fire call, said Bob.

"We contained it but it was so hot it melted the doors of the bank across the street," he said.

Other unforgettable fires were the Pate house fire in 1968 where four children and one adult died and the VZ Top mansion fire in 1980.

Over the years, Glen Falls and even Dry Falls have been grisly sites from which several people have fallen to their death.

"A 13-year-old boy walked out over the top of Dry Falls and fell. We didn't have any divers then, but a citizen diver offered to dive into the hole the boy had landed in, but said he just couldn't pull him out. We eventually got him out, but of course he was dead," said Bob. "Those things stay with you."

Whiteside Mountain has been the cause of a deaths, as well as a lot of in-

juries; more events that have seared the brains of Bob and the other fire and rescue volunteers.

As to advice, Bob asks that the families of volunteers be supportive and patient.

"A lot of calls are rewarding and you feel you've done something you feel good about but sometimes when things don't go well, when you get home you're depressed and wonder, 'If I had done this or that differently the outcome would have been different'" he said.

Delivering a baby was one thing Bob said he always wanted to do and his wish came true when Lila Shearl went into labor in the middle of the blizzard of 1993. Bob said they took her to the hospital where Dr. David Wheeler was on call.

"They thought Lila could make it to Sylva so Wheeler hopped into the cab of the ambulance and off we went, but before we got to Sylva we stopped the ambulance in the middle of the highway and delivered baby Michael Shearl."

Bob said when he first joined the force he was one of the youngest men. "Then we were the same age, then I was like a father figure, and now I'm the grandfather figure! My advice to the men is: be a good dedicated fireman, but don't neglect your fam-

• See BOB page 13

• See BOE page 11



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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

Hell is real; prepare against it



Dan Robinson, Pastor
Highlands Central Baptist
Church

In addition to pastoring, I have (for some 20 years now) also been teaching theological students. Sometimes this is on the homefront. Other times are international. Most recently this teaching ministry took me to Belize, Central America. It was my fourth visit to the country and third time to the theological school.

On this occasion one of my students asked: "Some people believe that hell is now on this earth. Is that true?" I answered "no" and went on to explain the Biblical doctrine of hell.

It is, in the most poignant sense of the word, a terrible truth. Yet one from which Jesus did not back away. He spoke about it more than anyone else in the Bible. And He talked about it more than He talked about heaven.

Rejectors of this doctrine have, throughout the ages, found some measure of pseudo-comfort by simply denying this truth. Frankly, that sets up an even bigger problem. Namely, did Jesus lie? Of course he didn't. So, we must conclude that the Son of God, in His incredible love for the human race, preached and taught about hell with the intention of a solemn warning.

I hope that if you are a believer in this doctrine your zeal and passion to warn others will multiply exponentially.

Compare this warning to a bridge up ahead being washed out. The oncoming traffic doesn't have a clue of the approaching danger. You are the herald of this danger. After all, how could you keep quiet? You would not be dismissed as an ignorant radical. Rather, you would be considered a life-saver and those whose lives you save could never thank you enough.

This was the attitude of Ezekiel. His words are found in the Bible in the book that bears his name, chapter three and verses 16 through 21 (I hope you will read those verses).

On the other hand, if you do not believe this doctrine, then I ask you to give it your most careful consideration.

The bridge IS out. I promise. And there is something you can do now to avoid the inescapable danger ahead.

Consider Jesus Christ and His great love for you. Consider a personal relationship with Him. Remember, no one knows you better and no one loves you more.

As someone has said: "There is a hell to shun and a heaven to gain." I do hope that you will do both.

Proverbs 3:5

• PLACES TO WORSHIP • John 3:16

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Wed.: Men's Bible Study -8:30 a.m., First Baptist Church

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10: 45am: Worship Service

Wed.: 5pm Dinner (\$7 adult, \$2 child), 6pm CBC University

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Sundays: Holy Eucharist Rite I (chapel), 8 am, Education and

choir rehearsal, 9 am, Holy Eucharist Rite II, (sanctuary), 10:30

Thursdays: Holy Eucharist, (chapel), 10 am

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

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Sun.: Worship 10:45 a.m.; School - 9:30 a.m.

Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m., Prayer Meeting - 6:15

p.m., Choir - 5 p.m.

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Wednesday: Prayer Service, 6:30 p.

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Thurs:12:30 - Women's Bible Study (nursery)

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Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg. - 7 p.m.

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

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Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study - 7

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WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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...BOE continued from page 8

will discuss where he is in the process; in March he will present the selection process and if approved will bring a list of the 68 eligible teachers to the board's April meeting.

Meanwhile, according to statistics from the National Center of Education listing actual dollars earned and current dollars from 1969 to 2013, North Carolina teachers rank last in the nation. Salaries have dropped 14.8% since 1969 meaning teachers now earn 14.8% less than they did in 1969 when North Carolina was in good shape compared to other states in the nation.

"Despite that, when you compare our students' achievement to what has happened to our teacher salaries, our teachers are teaching well despite what we are paying them," said Baldwin.

The following is a list of the 272 teachers eligible to be selected as the 25% and offered the 4-year contract and \$500 per year raise.

Dr. Baldwin encourages any teacher who believes he or she should have been included on this list to contact him.

Cartoogechaye School: (22)

Naomi Albee, Deborah Brendel, Deborah Brown, Laura Brow, Brian Crupi, Deborah Garvey, Paula Guy, Sarah Ann Holbrooks, Corinne Honey, Patricia Jackson, Janice Jordan, Amber Keener, Kathryn Jo Kennedy, Sarah Lowell, Rebecca McCall, Larry McConnell, Angela Phillips, Angela Pickens, Amber Raby, Kristina Richmond, Karen Rogers, Alisha Stewart

East Franklin School: (26)

Christina Baird, Jennifer Baldwin, Stephanie Braswell, Jacquelyn Brown, Lynda Elliott, Amber Engert, Katharine Fraser, Laura Fromknecht, Darlene Fromknecht, Vera Hoffman, Laura Holland, Brooke Keener, Vanessa Long, Angela Martin, Christine Moore, Lora Neitz, Jamie O'Donoghue, Synethia Owens, Pamela Owens, Crystal Parker, Charlotte Rhoden, Terry Stamey, Robin Sumner, Michael Waters, Dawn Watson, Jennifer Worley

Franklin High School: (59)

Susan Allen, Emily Awtrey, Kimberly Bateman, Katherine Breedlove, Mary Brooks, Michelle Brooks, Jason Brooks, Joshua Brooks, Gary Buchanan, Marilyn Buchanan, John Cantrell, Jenny Collins, Denise Davis, Devon Deal,

John Deville, Rita Esterwood, William Faetz, Tiffany Garrett, Katheryn Graham, Henrietta Haithcock, Dana Haley, William Hartbarger, Timothy Hawkins, Jennifer Hogsed, Sherri Houston, Jeffery Howard, Buddy Huckabee, Robert Jessup, Joshua Johnson, Rebecca Johnson, Robert Koppers, Joan Lansford, Kathleen Ledford, Monica Miller, Penny Mofitt, Maura Morris, Kenneth Neitz, Summer Passmore, Pamela Pattillo, Beverly Penland, Larry Pickens, Dina Picou, Charles Pinkston, John Pinix, Thomas Raby, Yvonne Robinson, Harold Rogers, Pamela Roper, Anna Shields, Margaret Simpson, Gwen Smith, Tammy Stiles, Alton Sutton, Vickie Sutton, Susan Thompson, Michael Turner, April Vinson, Lisa Welch, Sara Weresuk

Highlands School: (24)

Shirla Archer, Brian Aulizio, Gina Billingsley, Carol Bowen, Karen

Brooksbank, Sabrina Cashion, John Cashion, Ashly Coppage, Kara Faust, Christopher Green, Tracy Hedden, Brett Lamb, Michelle Lane, Julie McClellan, Cathy McIntyre-Ross, Meghan Mileti, Melanie Miller, Christine Murphy, Kimberly Pinkston, Anne Porter, Donna Sizemore, Stephanie Smathers, Denise West, Elizabeth Woods

Iotla Valley School: (24)

Amy Anders, Lisa Baldwin, Kimberly Burnette, Christy Cabe, Nell Cummins, Heather Guest, Christy Hart, Kimberly Hedden, Shay Holcombe, Karen Hopkins, Kari Houghton, David Kinsland, Lori Long, Jane Long, Robin Mason, Martha McConnell, Jessica McConnell, Suzanne Post, Mary Price-Egger, Terri Rogers, Crystal Teem, Michael Tyson, Anne Wiggin, Anne Wishon

Macon Early College: (6)

Daniel Alich, Holly Cabe, Jennifer England, Eric Jackson, Mary Pittman, Meghan Reynolds

Macon Middle School: (29)

April Anderson, Christina Barnett, Matthew Bradley, Samuel Brooks, Scott Burns, Bonnie Candalino, Jamie Clark, Cheri Clay, Sherri Demos, Rexanna Duvall, Kimberly Ensley, Jeffery Graham, Mark Guy, Ryan Haley, Tammy Harrold, Sherry Henderson, Davitta Henry, Joshua James, William Kimsey, Robert Long, Michelle Maslin, Darlene McDowell, James McNab, Saul Olvera-Rubio, Renee Rogers, Heather Shields, Sheila

Snyder, Sarae Thornton, Emily Wilson

Mountain View School: (32)

Leah Ballew, Judy Bell, Joyce Brendle-Fox, Donna Brooks, Samantha Bullis, Loretta Castner, Deborah Cloer, Carolyn Cope, Diane Cotton, Debra Gibbs, Marlene Greeble, Kimberly Green, Sean Greene, Joan Gurtler, Tracy Hagan, Landon Holland, Jennifer Huckabee

• See BOE page 13

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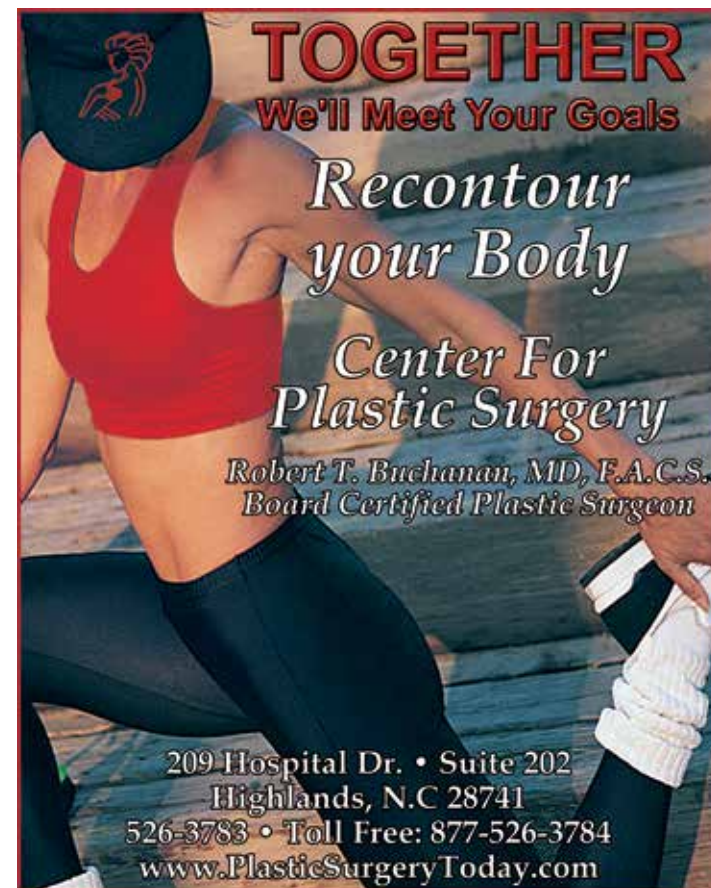
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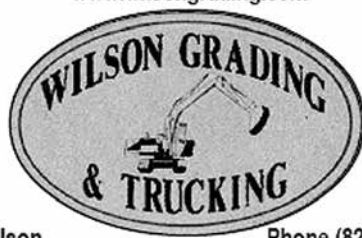


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• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands PD log entries from Nov. 30. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor, or public officials have been used.

Nov. 30

• At 9:55 a.m., officers assisted with a voluntary commitment at a residence on Hicks Road.

Dec. 17

• At 5:10 p.m., officers responded to a call about a juvenile who ran away at a residence on Smallwood Ave.

Dec. 18

• At 2:29 p.m., officers responded to a residence on Moorewood Circle concerning burglary and larceny where sports and recreation equipment and power and hand tools were stolen.

Dec. 27

• At 3:10 p.m., Stuart Walter Armor, 51, was arrested for driving left of center S. 2nd Street.

• At 10:45 p.m., officers responded to a call of simple physical assault at Old Edwards Inn where a woman was slapped on the face.

Dec. 29

• At 2 p.m., officers responded to a call of burglary with forced entry and fraud concerning cable charges at a residence on Spruce Street. Dec. 31

Dec. 30

• At 10:08 p.m., officers were called to a residence on Choctaw Lane for a welfare check. A woman was found DOA.

Dec. 31

• At 2:41 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on US 64 west.

Jan 1

• A little past midnight, a larceny from The Ugly Dog Pub was reported where a purse and jacket were taken from the bar.

Jan. 5

• At 5:30 a.m., officers responded to Old Edwards Inn concerning a drunk and disruptive patron.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries from Jan. 7

• At 9:31 a.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to Cashiers on a possible structure fire. It was cancelled en route.

• At 4:03 p.m., the dept. checked a heater in a residence on Oak Street.

Jan. 8

• At 12:04 p.m., the dept. responded to a possible structure fire on Flat Mountain Road. Fire was out on arrival.

• At 12:42 p.m., the dept. responded to a water flow alarm at OEI on Church Street.

• At 2:33 p.m., the dept. responded to an alarm at the hospital.

• At 4:28 p.m., the dept. responded to a water flow alarm at a residence on Falls Drive W.

• At 5:23 p.m., the dept. swan was reported stuck on the frozen Lake Sequoyah. A fireman took a canoe out on top of the ice and rescued the swan.

• At 8:34 p.m., the dept. responded to a aCO2 alarm at a residence on Rock Gap Rd.

• At 9:57 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Harris Drive where someone had fallen.

Jan. 9

• At 2:36 p.m., the dept. secured the landing for the MAMA helicopter at the hospital.

• At 3:26 p.m., the dept. responded to a water flow alarm at OEI on Main Street.

• At 9:46 p.m., and again at 11:28 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Wahoo Trail. EMS transported to the hospital for the second call.

Jan. 11

• At 3:26 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at OEI on Church Street. It was false.

...BOB continued from page 8

ily. Take care of your family. I know I missed a lot of stuff with my family because I always responded. But you need to think about your family first because they are going to be gone."

His daughter Karin Potts had this to say.

"I have often said he could write a book on the countless calls, the rescues on the mountains and waterfalls, saving lives ... some lost; tragedies, and many happy endings," said Karin. "It was simply a way for life for him, and our family. He was always ready to literally run out the door at any given moment. Obviously, we are thankful for all of the men that have given so much. I'm just amazed at Dad's dedication, commitment, and pride in the department for 50 years."

Please join the community at Bob's 50-years of service gathering at the fire house Friday, Jan. 24 from 2-4 p.m. No gifts, please.

— Kim Lewicki

...BOE continued from page 11

Kathryn Huscusson, Jessica Jones, Sandra Keener, Holly Kessler, Jennifer Love, Miranda Manley, Sheri McLennan 2S. Kathleen Moore, Jennifer Nation, Nicole Oberley, Sharon Shatley, Denise Shields, Sara Shook, Adam Tallent, Heather Watson

Nantahala School: (11)

Natalie Grant, Leslie Hollowell, Daniel Lopp, Leslie Mason, Jennifer Neal, Tammy Newton, Teresa Schmidt, Kathleen Shook, Maria Tallent, Joshua Taylor, Shannon West

South Macon School: (33)

Regina Barrett, Sarah Bolick, Linda Brogden, Melisa Cabe, Justin Cashion, Margaret Crownover, Melissa Curtis, Clara Dills, Melissa Faetz, Julie Henning, Delaney Holloway, Vickie Hubbs, Donna Kimsey, Christine Kinsland, Daniel Kowal, Tracy McCoy, Cristy Passmore, Kathleen Patterson, Charlotte Pearson, Meagan Rogers, Frances Seay, Sharon Sellers, Melissa Setser, Rena Sutton, Cathy Tippet, Tammy Trubicza, Pamela Turner, Linda Williams, Richard Woleslagle, Angela Wood, David Yokel, Deborah Young, Cody Zoellner

Union Academy: (6)

Jennifer Angel, Mary Jenkins, Anna Kohlman, Shelley Marshall, Barbara Schuldenfrei, Phyllis Thompson.

— Kim Lewicki

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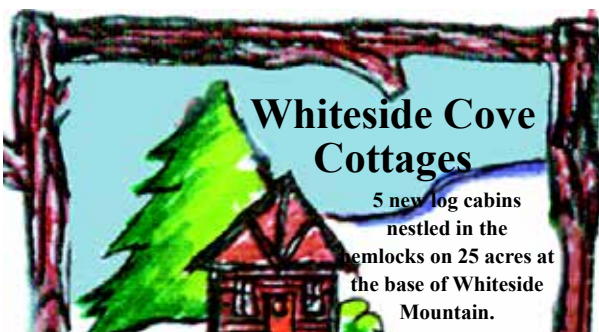
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...INVESTING continued from page 7

ment as well as outside at the meter or well pump. Get as much water out of the lines by opening all water valves and flush the toilets. Turn icemakers off, and make sure you open the shower valves.

4) If your water source is a well, have a heat source at the pump.

5) If you aren't at the home, have someone leave the faucets on a slow drip during extreme cold days and nights, and leave the cabinet doors open to allow pipes to get as much heat as possible.

6) If you use fuel oil or propane, make sure your home is on automatic fill up.

7) All HVAC units need to be serviced at least once a year, with filters changed at least twice a year.

If your home isn't going to be used during the winter months, it's always best to call on a licensed plumber to have your home properly winterized when not in use. This can be costly if you plan to come back

and forth, but it is well worth it if you think of the potential damages that could occur by not doing anything. If your home is for sale, ask plumbers to keep your home looking 'as normal' as possible, by replacing the toilet lids, leaving the refrigerators in place, replacing the bottom of the dishwasher, etc. Your listing broker can write a note to be left on the toilets/sinks warning they aren't to be used while the water is off to your home.

Winter in Highlands can be as rewarding as the other seasons; it's much quieter and a slower pace. Real estate sales and vacation rentals don't stop, and you may find it easier to 'shop' for a home in the winter. Come on up! the weather's fine (Now, when I say 'fine' that may be fine for ducks, or fine for Polar bears, but come on up anyway; we're here, and if we can do it, so can you.

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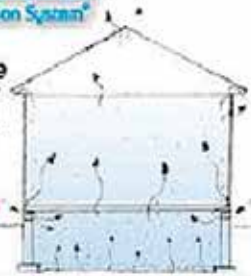
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