

Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., March 13, 2014

Commissioners are considering nixing employee parking restrictions this coming season

Commissioners didn't utter the final word on the subject at the worksession meeting Thursday, Feb. 27, but there's a chance that parking restrictions in the

downtown area will be nixed for the coming year.

Town Manager Bob Frye said with the "season" approaching he is already getting complaints about

parking from the same merchants who complain all season long.

"I and my staff find ourselves dealing with the same people each year and for whatever reason they

are either unable or unwilling to agree to abide by the parking restrictions. I am constantly asked to referee between various

•See PARKING page 5

Sidewalk dining and more subjects at Planning Board mtg.

Suggested changes to regulations were the main subject discussed at the February Planning Board meeting.

Sidewalk dining

A year and a half ago sidewalk dining was discussed as it pertained to Sweet Treats Deli on the corner of Main and N. 4th Street.

The consensus of the Town Board at the time was that sidewalks are town property and couldn't be used to extend a restaurant's business.

At February's Planning Board meeting, Thomas Craig, owner of The Ugly Dog Pub, suggested the Planning Board take a new look at the issue.

The summer of 2013, the NC General Assembly adopted legislation that permitted local

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Read to build brain power and feel inspired!



Brady, Wyatt and Olive, 1st-graders in Ms. Chalker's Great Beginnings class, browse selections at the Highlands School annual Spring Scholastic Book Fair in progress through Friday of this week. It will be open through Thursday, March 13 during school hours, Thursday evening from 5 pm to 6 pm before the Talent Show, and Friday, March 14 until noon. The Book Fair is a fundraiser for the Media Center to purchase new books and other materials.

Photo by Carol Bowen

B of Elections upholds Haven's candidacy

Candidate challenge filed against candidate Shields is withdrawn

By Brittany Burns

On Tuesday, the Macon County Board of Elections unanimously voted to not uphold Commissioner Ron Haven's candidacy challenge during a hearing on Tuesday morning.

"I am thankful for all of the support I have received from so

many Macon County Citizens from all parties," said Haven in a statement. "I will continue to serve Macon County to the best of my ability with our other commissioners in obtaining the best place to live on earth."

Haven's attorney, Orville Coward Jr., does not believe an

appeal to the ruling will be filed.

Macon County resident and county commission District II resident Charles Nichols filed the challenge last week, stating that Haven does not live at the address given on his candidate application, which is the same address he

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Teachers petition Board of Ed to oppose state's tenure changes

By Brittany Burns

The board of education continued the discussion on teacher tenure changes last month, this time directing Macon County Schools attorney John Henning Jr., to pursue establishing another resolution to send to the state opposing the legislation changes.

After hearing from Macon County teacher Darlene Fromknecht regarding her firm stance against the state's mandate to award only 25 percent of teachers a four-year contract and \$500 bonus in exchange for the relinquishing of tenure status, the board moved to join other districts in the state to once again plead with state lawmakers to reverse the legislation.

Fromknecht told the board that 100 percent of teachers at seven out of the nine school sites in the district, and 94 percent at Franklin High School, signed a petition urging the board of education to pass a resolution in opposition to the state regarding the teacher tenure changes.

"The teachers in our county

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• MAYOR ON DUTY •

What to do about parking?

Highlands Mayor
Pat Taylor

The hot topic is the parking problem in the Highland's B1 zone. Since downtown parking has been an issue for years, at the recent town retreat, two veteran commissioners suggested the solution may be to have no parking ordinance at all.

At one point we had an ordinance with a two-hour parking limit. Merchants and some residents were not supportive, and it was rescinded. The current ordinance came about as an agreement by town merchants prohibiting employee parking on Main Street during most of the year. Enforcement is complaint driven. Some merchants have been very consistent in requiring their employees to park off Main Street, while others have not. The crux of the problem is how to develop a workable ordinance.

Some have criticized the police and Town Manager of being lazy and not enforcing the existing ordinance. Many times when the police issue a parking citation, the offending party goes to Town Hall, or to a commissioner, outraged and vowing not to pay the fine.

While the police can issue a parking citation, it is not so easy for the town to collect the fine. North Carolina statutes place limits on parking ordinances. The state does not authorize municipal parking courts, so all parking cases go before district court.

The town has two options. It can take the offender to small claims court by paying a filing fee of over \$100. If the town wins, the judgment includes the filing fee and the fine. But, if the defendant refuses to pay, the only consequence is that the recorded judgment will appear on the defendant's credit report.

The second option is to charge the offender with a violation of a municipal ordinance. The charging officer would have to appear in district court, and the violator would have the right to counsel.

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• LETTERS •

Nixing parking restrictions is the wrong thing to do

Dear Editor,

I would like to respond to the Town of Highlands discussion at its recent board retreat; specifically, its desire to eliminate all parking restrictions in downtown Highlands. (See front page article Commissioners considering nixing employee parking restrictions this coming season.)

It is unclear to me the reason our Town Manager and several of our commissioners would want to eliminate all parking restrictions and require merchants and property owners to manage parking issues.

As a business owner on Main Street, I see first hand the importance of restricting parking to customers and visitors for approximately nine months out of the year. The current parking ordinance has worked

very well for the past five years.

As with any ordinance or law, you will always have to deal with individuals who do not abide by the law but this should not be a reason to abandon the law.

It appears Mr. Frye stated the following at the board retreat: "The Town of Highlands doesn't have a parking problem - the merchants have a parking problem, and they keep looking to the town to solve these problems for them."

As to this comment, it is my understanding only the Town of Highlands, Macon County or the State of North Carolina has any real authority to impose and enforce parking ordinances.

Is Mr. Frye suggesting the merchants create something akin to a parking militia and monitor and enforce parking regulations we deem to be appropriate? It is my position that our elected officials should govern with the consent of the people, and since Mr. Frye is not elected, he should not be able to introduce policy without any consent of those being governed.

I have had the opportunity over the

years to visit many of the downtowns in Western North Carolina, including Hendersonville, Brevard, Blowing Rock and others. These small downtowns also deal with parking issues and they do their best to enforce parking rules for the benefit of all.

As I am sure Mr. Frye and town commissioners are aware, Main Street Highlands real estate is extremely valuable and the parking spaces that support the businesses who occupy the real estate are also extremely valuable. Any decision to abandon regulation of parking in downtown Highlands will have a significant negative impact on the business community and the citizens who enjoy calling this town their primary or secondary home.

The current parking system in Highlands is not perfect but it does work. A majority of the business owners and employees keep their vehicles off Main Street during the restrictive periods. For those who choose not to follow the law, we need the ability to rely upon a strong ordinance and support from the agencies authorized to enforce the law.

I realize it is not enjoyable to deal with parking complaints but parking rules on public property can only be managed by the appropriately authorized government agencies and not parking militias.

I would urge anyone interested in this matter to contact the Town of Highlands, the mayor and all of our commissioners and urge them not to pursue any changes to our parking system.

Jerry Moore
Kilwin's Chocolates & Ice Cream -
Highlands

Keep parking restrictions

Dear Editor,

The Chamber is opposed to the revocation of parking regulations as proposed at the recent Town Retreat. As part of the Chamber's response we plan to begin a petition to present to the Town Commissioners and Mayor Taylor. Anyone opposed to the revocation of the parking regulations, not just businesses, is encouraged to sign. They may do so at the Chamber & Visitor Center Offices at 108 Main Street, Monday - Friday between the hours of 9a - 5p.

Bob Kietlyka
Executive Director
Highlands Area Chamber of
Commerce

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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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listed when filing to vote. When filing for candidacy, Haven listed 433 East Palmer Street as his address, which is also the address for the Budget Inn Motel located in town, which Haven owns.

During Haven's testimony, which was led by questions from Coward, Haven confirmed that while he owns property at 750 Mill Creek Road, he maintains his domicile at 433 East Palmer Street in Franklin.

In his challenge, Nichols presented both local and state records to demonstrate that Haven owns both the Budget Inn as well as a residence located in Mill Creek.

Coward asked Haven to provide an explanation regarding where Haven spent his nights during the 2013 year. According to Haven, 100 nights were spent on the road promoting gun and trade shows through the region, 160 nights were spent either at the Budget Inn or at other various

properties owned by Haven for work related activities, 45 were spent with his family taking his two sons, who are enrolled at Macon Early College, to historical sites across the country, two weeks were spent in California visiting Haven's wife's family, and 45 nights were spent at the Mill Creek residence.

Haven explained during the hearing that he has lived at the Budget Inn since 2011 while his wife and sons have lived at Mill Creek. Prior to 2011, Haven and his family lived at the Franklin Motel in a three bedroom apartment. When the Franklin Motel was disposed of due to foreclosure, Haven moved into the Budget Inn and his family moved to Mill Creek. Haven explained that he made the decision to live at the Budget Inn to be close to town and close to his business. It was a business decision.

According to Haven, his residence at
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Freedom is slipping away in America

Dear Editor,

I was saddened to read of the actions of the Macon County School Board's decision to become a party in opposition to School Vouchers. Why should the government hold almost total domination over our children's education? Why should money taken from the taxpayers for education not follow the student? Why should parents have to constantly defend their right to say how their children are educated? Why should the public schools not have to compete for students? If they do a better job of educating children than other institutions, they need not fear of becoming irrelevant. Also, properly structured, why can't teachers' benefits and retirement follow them as well wherever they choose to teach? Yes, freedom is fast slipping away in America.

It saddens me also, to see our neighbors and friends who are elected to represent us in matters of education fall under the misguided influence of the Washington elite who say, "Trust me, I'm from the Government and I'm here to help you for I know best how and what your children need".

If the members of the school board feel that they need to defend the status quo, let them be honest and foot the bill themselves for this litigation. Don't use taxpayer money to defend your convic-

tions. Just have the courage of your convictions and write a personal check to the lawyers who are profiting from this action.

It is well to remember that wisdom does not come with receiving more votes than your opponent. It is written somewhere that wisdom comes from above.

**Jim Steeley
Otto, NC**

Messianic Leaders

Dear Editor,

Probably one of the oldest traits in human beings is to look for a Messiah, someone to come along and solve all of our problems. History is filled with all sorts of Gods dating back long before even ancient Greece and their multiplicity of Gods.

Ancient tribes needed good leaders in order to survive and even the smallest of tribes had their leaders, often someone who was strong enough to kill the opposition or smart enough to outwit them.

In modern times, we elect people who hopefully, will solve our problems, which is what a democracy is all about. We root for our favorite candidate, just like we do for our favorite football team. But, sadly, we sometimes root for someone who is a great speaker but lacks ability and I would have to put the blame squarely on the television media for this problem. We are beguiled by charm and charisma and on television you only see the good side to the candidate. Many would vote for Justin Beiber for president because he's a celebrity.

Typically, rumors are circulating about

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...LETTERS from page 3

Hillary Clinton being preened for the 2016 elections and experts are trying desperately to improve her image from what was formerly that of a cold and vengeful woman. Never mind that she is building a dynasty which is dangerous in itself and sometimes has led to dictatorships in other countries. If she does run for president, you can be assured that her image will be polished and cleaned up and she'll be pitched as a Messiah.

Leftists have worked hard to paint the Tea Party as being radical when in fact it is the Liberal Leftists who are actually the radicals. The Tea Party simply would like to force government to limit its spending to a manageable level and not load our children with higher taxes. They understand that in just a few years the interest alone on the money we borrow will cost more than our entire military budget. But, again, it all depends on what we see on television and how the media paints them.

So how in heck do we solve the problem of electing folks who are charismatic but lacking in ability to manage the problems of our country? Frankly, I don't have the slightest idea.

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...PARKING continued from page 1

merchants," he said. "Not to be facetious, but the Town of Highlands doesn't have a parking problem; merchants have a parking problem and they keep looking to the town to solve these problems for them."

According to Planning Director Josh Ward, there are a little over 960 parking spots in town – they just aren't all on Main Street and merchants and employees want to park near their businesses.

After numerous discussions with Ward, staff and Police Chief Bill Harrell, Frye offered three options to the "parking problem."

Option one – stick with the current restrictions for employee parking with the expansion through December.

"We could stay with program we have now which is basically self-enforcement and requires cooperation between merchants. It would work if all merchants would comply and stop parking on Main Street. Until there is some penalty for parking where they shouldn't, they will continue to do that," said Frye.

Option Two – move to a fairly Draconian enforcement procedure.

"The chief and I don't favor this at all. In this scenario there would be penalties for parking where you should not and it would force us to become Parking Nazis. It would also mean the chief would have to put someone full-time downtown marking tires and towing cars. We don't think that will work well any way you look at it," he said.

Option Three – no parking restrictions this year.

"We could let the merchants deal with the parking because they are causing the problems. If they can't resolve it among themselves, then maybe next year we can come back with a suggestion they might be willing to listen to," said Frye. "Highlands doesn't have a parking problem; the merchants do. They have issues among themselves about who should park where. They get mad if someone parks and goes to a restaurant for instance and isn't in their store."

Chief Harrell said enforcing the parking restrictions is difficult because people say they weren't working, they were shopping and now 'you've run me off from contributing to the economy of Highlands,'" he said.

Commissioner Donnie Calloway said he's the one who came up with Option 3 – eliminate parking restrictions this year.

"I'm tired of it. I was sitting on the board 19 years ago and we dealt with the same thing. Let them deal with it," he said.

Commissioner Amy Patterson suggested eliminating all Main Street parking.

"Let's force them to park somewhere

else and make it a pedestrian mall. A lot of towns are actually doing that," she said. "Or we could open it to everyone and let them duke it out."

Constructing a parking garage was also suggested. In fact, during the public comment period of the Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting Wolfgang Green, who owns Wolfgang's Restaurant on Main Street, suggested the town construct a parking garage somewhere in the vicinity of Main Street.

Cyprus Restaurant was seeking a Special Use Permit to construct a deck over the Xtreme Threads building on Main Street which is next door to Cyprus's soon to be new location previously occupied by Oak Street Café.

"I will love to see Nick [Figel] on Main Street. He will definitely add something to Main Street and I know he has been waiting a long time to do this. I would just suggest that the town start looking at building a parking garage because parking is going to be very tight. With parking for merchants and restaurants on Main Street, where are those people going to go?" he asked. "I just want to throw it out there to get this process going. It is something that needs to be done. On Saturday this week and last week, all the parking spots on Main Street were gone. And we are talking about the second weekend in February."

He said the garage should be as close as possible to Main Street and it would be good for businesses in town.

"If merchants lose business and restaurants lose business because there is no parking, the town isn't going to have any taxes," he said.

At the worksession, concerning the current parking restrictions, Frye said until the mindset among the merchants changes Highlands will always have this problem.

"We are tired of being dragged in the middle of this issue of who can park where and when. We really can't force them not to park because prosecution for violating the employee-restricted parking rule is very difficult.

Mayor Patrick Taylor, who used to be the Highlands Magistrate, said the courts are concerned about real cases not parking violations.

However, Commissioner Brian Stiehler said he is reluctant to walk away from parking restrictions.

"It's a small handful of merchants who are causing problems and they will likely continue to do so no matter what we do," he said.

A final decision wasn't made, but commissioners agreed to discuss this again at the March 20 Town Board meeting.

– Kim Lewicki



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...SIDEWALK continued from page 1

governments to enact sidewalk dining ordinances affecting sidewalks located within the right-of-way of NC DOT streets and highways. The act allows NCDOT to grant the administrative right to local governments to regulate sidewalk dining within their respective zoning jurisdictions according to standards set forth in the act.

The truth is, NC cities have been regulating sidewalk dining for decades through local ordinances and unapproved encroachments on NC public sidewalks have also occurred for a long time.

Under the new law, tables and chairs must be placed a minimum of six feet from any travel lane of a NC DOT street or highway. If on-street parking is offered adjacent to the dining area, then parked cars serve to provide this separation instead. If on-street parking doesn't provide the buffer, then dining must be set back as much as six feet from the curb.

An unobstructed sidewalk space for pedestrians must also be provided. The new legislation mandates that local governments require at least five feet of sidewalk

if the right of way belongs to NC DOT.

According Planning Director Josh Ward, most sidewalks in Highlands aren't wide enough to support dining and pedestrian passage – they would need to be between 10 and 12 feet wide and they are mostly five feet wide, he said.

The only sidewalk in town wide enough to accommodate dining and the pedestrian passage may be in front of The Ugly Dog Pub. Thomas Craig recused himself from voting on this issue but was allowed to discuss it with the board.

He said he understood the town's stance on not wanting restaurants to extend their "footprint" onto a public sidewalk owned by the town, but suggested the town lease sidewalk space.

"We have about 2,000 utility poles in town that the town leases, maybe the town should look at leasing sidewalk space for the purpose of sidewalk dining," he said.

The subject may be discussed at an upcoming Planning Board meeting.

...TEACHERS continued from page 1

are committed to developing all of our students into thoughtful and responsible life-long learners," said Fromknecht. "We devote our full intellectual abilities to providing high-quality instruction that not only builds students' intellect, but their character as well. We seek to maintain positive relationships with all of our families at our school and we recognize the intrinsic worth of every student and every family. We are colleagues and collaborators who work together to help our students succeed. We believe, without any doubt or hesitation, that asking 25 percent of our teachers to forfeit their career status in exchange for a small bonus is 100 percent misguided. We believe that the improvement of teacher quality and of public schools can only come through meaningful support of all teachers."

Fromknecht's statement echoed speeches that have been given by teachers across the state to local school boards. Teachers like Fromknecht believe that the

teacher tenure law changes may be intended to weed out the bad teachers, but instead they are eroding the professionalism of teachers across the country.

According to Fromknecht, 11 other districts in North Carolina have passed similar resolutions seeking to revoke the new mandate. The resolution also asks that the monies allocated for the 25 percent bonus still be given to local districts with the permission to use the funding in alternative ways.

Board Chairman Jim Breedlove, with the support of his board members, directed Henning Jr. to draft a resolution similar to the other 11 counties in the state.

Although Macon County officials continue to oppose the legislation, as it stands, it is the law, so Dr. Chris Baldwin explained his due diligence to move forward in determining a means to identify the 25 percent of teachers in the event the law is not reversed.

Dr. Baldwin presented board members with survey results regarding the stance of teachers in

Exterior Materials

With Cyprus Restaurant moving to the old Oak Street Café Main Street location, the Planning Board and later the Zoning Board of Adjustment had to say "no" to plans requesting the use of sheet copper on the side of the building facing the deck that will be built on top of Xtreme Threads.

The project was given the green light by both boards – in January by the Planning Board and in February by the Zoning Board with the granting of a Special Use Permit – but since metals aren't on the Commercial Building Exterior Materials List, the plans were OK'd without the use of copper.

However, since the Planning Board thought the use of copper would be a plus, at its February meeting, it recommended amending the exterior materials list to allow untreated sheet copper on 30% of any one façade which matches the regulation regarding the use of stucco.

The amended list will be taken to the Town Board. If approved, the issue will be the subject of a public hearing prior to Town Board's final approval

• See SIDEWALK page 9

the district on ways of identifying the 25 percent of teachers who should be awarded the contracts.

Of the three options presented, 49.6 percent or 68 of the 137 teachers who took the survey, suggested that a random district-wide lottery be used to select the 25 percent. The survey was sent to all teachers, regardless if they were eligible for consideration of the 25 percent or not.

The board's consensus on the subject was to further review the survey results and to continue considering whether or not to offer teachers an opt-out option regarding the 25 percent process all together. Breedlove explained that an opt-out option would allow teachers to sign a waiver saying they do not want to be considered at all for the 25 percent, regardless of eligibility.

The board plans to continue evaluating the information they were given and will revisit the topic during the March meeting later this month.



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'All Things New' to perform April 5 at WCU to benefit Gilliam's Promise

All Things New, a contemporary worship band is rolling into Cullowhee, North Carolina on April 5th to perform a benefit concert for Gilliam's Promise. The group, fresh from the national The Hands of God tour with Francesca Battistelli, is excited to bring their music to our area in support of Gilliam's Promise.

Their self titled album released in 2013 was highly praised by fans, media and radio. Two singles from that album, "New Man" and "Washed Over Me", charted on Contemporary Christian charts. Their sound has been compared to Mumford & Sons and their foot stomping, dulcimer driven, three part harmonies are sure to bring the crowd to their feet.

Gilliam's Promise is a drug free coalition which was formed in Highlands, NC in 2010 as the vision of Bill and Eleanor Cheney who realized the need to support area youth in an effort to help them choose a drug free lifestyle. Gilliam's Promise reaches students before they become curious about or pressured into experimenting with drugs or alcohol, and provides them with drug free education programs, opportunities for community service and a scholarship program which rewards their commitment to a drug free lifestyle. The excitement and interest in Gilliam's Promise continues to grow throughout the region and their coalition has now grown to include chapters in Franklin, NC and Weaverville, NC.

Visit www.gilliamspromise.org for ticket information or call their office at (828)526-2220.

Talent show and dinner at HS March 13

Looking for an evening of great food and entertainment? Join us on Thursday, March 13 at Highlands School for dinner and a show! The Highlands School PTO is sponsoring a talent showcase, Highlands' Rising Stars. Singing, dancing and instrumental acts will be performed by students and faculty. The show begins at 6:30pm in the Gymnasium. Admission is \$2 per person.

Before the show, drop by the school cafeteria to enjoy a delicious dinner from 5pm until 6:30pm. Dinner plates are \$7 each and include BBQ (prepared by ...on the Verandah), Asian Cole Slaw, Mac 'n Cheese, dessert, and a drink.



MC Schools Kindergarten Orientation 2014-2015

Kindergarten Orientations are for Parents and Children. Any child who will be 5 on or before August 31, 2014 is eligible. For more details contact the school in your attendance zone. Kindergarten orientations are for parents and children.

Nantahala: March 31 at 5pm; Cartoogechaye: April 4 at 9am; Iotla: April 10 at 9am; Highlands: April 24 at 10am; South Macon: April 25 at 9:15am; and East Franklin: April 25 at 9am

MET Opera Live in HD this Saturday at PAC

Richard Erye's stunning new production of Werther starring the incomparable Jonas Kaufmann and featuring French mezzo-soprano Sophie Koch in her highly-anticipated Met debut is the hit of the season!

"A taut drama about passion, obsession and pursuit... with Mr. Erye's fiercely precise directing and the riveting performances of tenor Jonas Kaufmann as the unhappy Werther and mezzo Sophie Koch—making her house debut—as Charlotte, the woman he loves. The dark, resonant timbre of [Kaufmann's] tenor gives him weight; its swordlike directness makes him unstoppable. Every moment has the exact vocal color it needs."— The Wall Street Journal

"Kaufmann, currently the most in-demand, versatile and exciting tenor in opera... is ideal in the role. He sings with dark colorings, melting warmth, virile intensity and powerful top notes. French mezzo-soprano Sophie Koch... brings a plush, strong voice



and aching vulnerability to Charlotte. Mr. Erye's production, while essentially traditional, uses video imaginatively and has touches of modern imagery. Mr. Erye deserves unreserved credit for the detailed and involving performances he draws from his cast."— The New York Times

The MET Opera Live in HD, Saturday, March 15. The pre-Opera discussion lead by Beverly Pittman begins at 12:30pm and the MET Opera begins at 12:55pm. Tickets are available online: highlandspac.org or by calling 828.526.9047. Highlands PAC 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands

Register now for Summer Nature Day Camps

Registration is now open for the 2014 summer Nature Day Camps at the Highlands Nature Center. Five different camps are being offered: "WOW! – A World of Wonder" (ages 4-6), "Amazing Animals" (ages 7-10), "NatureWorks" (ages 8-11), "Mountain Explorers" (ages 10-13), and "Junior Ecologists" (ages 11-14). Most camps are offered more than once during the summer, and sessions run from Tuesday to Friday each week. For complete schedules, costs, and other information, please call 828-526-2623 or visit the summer camps webpage at www.highlandsbiological.org.

Easter Sunrise Service set for April 20

Sunday, April 20, 6:15am Interdenominational Sunrise Service at the Biological Center's Amphitheater (Inclement Weather at Incarnation

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To list or not to list...that is the question!

Spring brings excitement to each and every one of us! Gray skies show hints of blue that linger longer and drab trees and landscapes give promise to greener things to come.

So it is with homes that sellers are considering putting on the market. Gutters need cleaning, decks need staining, limbs and debris need to be picked up and driveways blown free of pesky leaves. Homes need to be opened up, allowing stale air to find another resting place, winter layers of dust removed, fans turned on to circulate air, and kitchen and baths put back together if the home was winterized.

I have already had calls from sellers asking if they should wait until June to list when flowers are blooming and more people are in town. My answer has changed from years past. I now tell them not to wait. With the influence of social media streamlining our lives prospective buyers are searching the "web" and contacting us if something appeals to them. After discussing various choices with them they will set a date to come and see. If you aren't listed you aren't in the game because once you are in our MLS you become part of Realtor.com, Trulia, and hundreds of other sites that are connected to our websites. Plus your competition is less now than



Pat Allen
Broker-in-charge
828-526-8784 (office)
828-200-9179 (cell)

when the season officially begins.

Another important factor to discuss is rentals. I have seen this time and time again. Sellers feel that the extra rental income is nice to have but I can tell you from experience you cut your odds of selling at least in half by renting. Renters feel that they are paying "good money" and should not be bothered and the house is never "show ready!" Appointments must be made, renters may be hard to

locate and buyers are only here for a short time. It really hampers a sales opportunity. It is a fact that it will take longer to sell your home and it has aged and wear and tear has occurred accommodating renters.

This winter has been brutal but I have five properties under contract that came from website leads versus buyers being here looking during the frigid temps and snow! So if you are considering listing your home give us a call and let us help you get out there on the playing field. We will do a market analysis so we don't price your property too high OR too low and give you suggestions on making your home show better. As a past decorator I love to make your home look its best!

Pat Allen is Owner/Broker-in-charge of Pat Allen Realty Group. Contact her at 828-526-8784 or 828-200-9179 or pat.f.allen@gmail.com.

...LETTERS continued from page 4

History is replete with people being elected to positions they were not qualified for and many countries suffered disastrously for it.

All I can safely say is that we need to ask more critical questions and demand answers before we cast our vote for someone. Is the person taking our country in the right direction, do they know anything about what made our country so successful and how might they get it moving again?

Right now in our history, like never before, we need to ask questions and forget which party they belong to. Vote for the most qualified, but please, avoid wishful thinkers.

Bob Wilson
Franklin, NC

Voter ID card is OK

Dear Editor,

A lot of letters to the Western Caroli-

na papers have been written about the new Voter ID rules. I went to see what one has to do to get a free voter ID card.

First, I was told at the Board of Elections that no one will need a photo ID card for the election in 2014.

I also learned that only about three tenths of one percent of the people in North Carolina may not have a photo ID card of some kind. That might amount to about 270 people per county.

In Jackson County that would actually be about 81 people. I inquired about how many people had applied to get a photo ID card at the Jackson County Drivers License Bureau. The answer was I was the second person this year.

My conclusion is that there has been a lot of newspaper space spent on a problem that has no bearing on the next election in 2014.

Jim Mueller
Glenville, NC

Concert to benefit Haiti mission

On Sunday, March 23, Songs of Joy and Sorrow: An Afternoon of Music for Cello and Piano, Featuring the Manhattan-based A.W.Duo (Alyona Aksyonova, piano/James Waldo, cello). Works by Beethoven, Myaskovsky, Debussy, Scriabin and Ayumi Okada. Sunday, March 23 at 4:30 pm at the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, Highlands. Free with donations to benefit Highlands Friends of Haiti.



...SIDEWALK continued from page 6

since it would require amending the Unified Development Ordinance.

This process can take up to 90 days but would allow Nick Figel, owner of Cyprus Restaurant to use copper on 30% of the façade facing the deck, after all.

The Greenway

At the February meeting, members also learned that the old sled run trail on Oak Street will become a Trail Head to access the Greenway Trail.

Greenway spokesperson Hilrie Quinn said there aren't a lot of visible trail heads in town – mainly at Big Bear Pen and the Dog Park at the Rec Park – so the Greenway

committee would like to have an entrance to the system at 1st and Oak streets which is just up from the Visitor Center.

"We plan to reopen this section which will then connect with the existing trail which can now only be accessed from Oak Lane," said Quinn.

A 'welcome' gazebo will be erected where the old restroom was once located – on the flat area at the top of the old sled run.

Quinn said they were seeking a recommendation prior to going to the Town Board and they got it.

– Kim Lewicki

...HAVEN continued from page 3

the Budget Inn is where Haven's clothes and toiletries are, and also has a kitchen that Haven has used in the past.

Coward called Nichols as a witness for the hearing and questioned the method in which Nichols took to draft the candidacy challenge document. According to Nichols, although he is the one who signed it and presented it to the board of elections, he is not certain who actually wrote it. Nichols did testify that former Democratic Chairman Corey Duvall assisted Nichols with the research and fact gathering for the evidence presented in the document.

As of Tuesday afternoon, Nichols stated that he was unsure if he would attempt to appeal the board's ruling.

Board of Elections member Gary Dills praised the board's bi-partisan decision. While Dills is a Republican representative on the board and made the motion to not uphold the challenge, Sara Waldroop, a Democrat, seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. "I think the unanimous decision goes to show that politics didn't play into our decision and that we took time to evaluate all the facts we were presented with," said Dills.

Meanwhile on Friday, March 7 another candidacy challenge based on residency was

filed with the Board of Elections – this time against Candidate Gary Shields for Macon County Commission District 2.

"I, Victor L. Drummond, being a qualified voter in the Macon County Commissioner District 2 and duly sworn, do hereby file this challenge to the declared candidacy of Gary Mack Shields for Macon County Commissioner of District 2 and make that challenge not only as to the qualifications of Gary Mack Shields as a candidate of the 2nd District Commissioner race, but also challenge Gary Mack Shields' qualification as a voter in the Precinct of Millshoals," reads the challenged filed with the Macon County Board of Elections.

However, on Wednesday, March 12, Drummond withdrew his challenge.

"I, Victor L. Drummond, do hereby withdraw that challenge not only as to the qualifications of Gary Mack Shields as a candidate of the 2nd District Commissioner race, but also withdraw the challenge to Gary Mack Shields' qualification as a voter in the Precinct of Millshoals," reads the withdrawal.

Drummond said the ambiguity of the statute verbiage caused him to pause.

• See HAVEN page 14

• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

Why is culture so enamored with superheroes?

By Gary Hewins
Community Bible Church

Movies about superheroes are literally a multi-billion dollar industry. Culture is going to get its superheroes via a comic book or on a big screen. Why is our culture so consistently enamored with Batman, Spiderman, Iron Man, Thor, Captain America, the Incredible Hulk, Flash and all their cohorts? Doesn't this seem strange to you? Beyond the obvious entertainment value I suspect that superheroes meet a deeper need in each of our lives.

We want Hollywood celebrity status and heroism to be one in the same but we both know that really isn't true. We want for our favorite athletes to be heroic but without performance enhancing drugs. We would like for our politicians to be heroic but their approval ratings aren't so heroic. So we pay for our heroes at the box office. Why?

Here are some of my personal explanations regarding superheroes and their immense popularity:

- Bruce Wayne (Batman) and Peter Parker (Superman) were just ordinary guys who experienced terribly traumatic losses during childhood. Many people today can identify with early trauma.

- People feel ordinary but want to live extraordinary lives
- People want to rely upon supernatural intervention in times of distress.

- People want to be seen from above as someone worth saving.

- People want to see justice prevail against gross injustice
- People want to place their trust in someone beyond themselves and their own limited understanding.

- People want someone else to absorb the brunt of physical and emotional opposition.

- People want to see someone suddenly become someone else because we often want to become someone else ourselves

I think we like our superheroes because deeply embedded in the imprint of our souls is a desire for God because we were made in his image. He endured trauma on our behalf, that we may live extraordinary lives in him. He can and did intervene supernaturally on our behalf, because you are certainly worth saving. He battles injustice and remains trustworthy and knowable. He absorbed the brunt of our punishment so we wouldn't have to. He was supernaturally endowed with power to provide you and me the means to become someone other than who we have been. We don't need a phone booth to make that kind of transformation, we simply need to acknowledge our need of Christ as our Savior and ask him for an ongoing friendship. We each need to acknowledge our "kryptonite-like sin" and ask for the forgiveness found only in Christ.

True heroes haven't died they are all around us. Heroes today are not unlike heroes of any other day. Show me a hero and I will show you someone reflecting the characteristics of Christ; like soldiers defending freedom with a willingness to die for Truth, first responders fighting injustice, single moms raising children, nurses caring for the sick, humble men and women striving to work hard and provide for their families, a young pregnant girl deciding to keep her unexpected baby, a teacher willing to stay after school to help with algebra, the teenager that visits the elderly woman down the street. Enjoy the superheroes at the box office but not at the expense of missing Christ-He is who you are looking for. I want to encourage you to get in your imaginary phone booth, make a serious change and enjoy a private conversation with Jesus Christ only to realize the power you will have to live in Him and move in Him and have your being in Him. See you at the movies.

Proverbs 3:5

• PLACES TO WORSHIP • John 3:16

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10:45am: Worship Service
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Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 am; Prayer Meeting 6:15 pm; Choir 5 pm

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• HEALTH MATTERS •

Non-cosmetic eyelid problems

By Dr. Bob Buchanan
Center for Plastic Surgery

Problems of the eyelids are exceedingly common. They are exceptionally problematic because they disturb the proper function of the eyelid, which, in turn, can affect vision, cause dry eye, cause headache or even lead to blindness. They can be divided into those arising within the eyelid itself due to abnormalities of the eyelid muscles or malposition of the eyelid itself and external problems that just happen to occur on the eyelid or affect it.

One of the most common problems of the eyelid is droop of the upper lid. This problem can be either extrinsic or intrinsic. Intrinsic droop is secondary to an abnormality of the muscle holding the eyelid up. This is complicated by the fact that there are actually three muscles that elevate the upper eyelid and any one of them can cause droop. The most common problem occurs when the levator, the voluntary lid elevator, stretches and becomes lax with time. We see this very commonly in people seeking cosmetic improvement of the eyelids. This muscle is easily accessed through a regular blepharoplasty incision and requires only a few stitches to imbricate it and elevate the eyelid to a normal position. Another common cause of droop seen at the time of cosmetic consultation is from descent of the brow. This is most commonly extrinsic, due to gravitational pull on the brow causing the tissue from above the eyelid itself to descend into the eyelid, pushing it down. This is frequently corrected by the frontalis muscle, the muscle that elevates the brow until the muscle is no longer able to compensate for gravity. Today, we frequently see worsening of this problem from over overzealous use of Botox® to smooth the brow. Once the frontalis muscle is paralyzed and can no longer holding the brow up, the brow descends. Unfortunately, the only treatment for this is time to allow the Botox® to

wear off. Usually this is corrected with some type of brow lift procedure which pulls the tissues back into the brow where they belong and out of the eyelid, thus allowing the lid to assume its normal position.

The third muscle that controls eyelid position is Muller's muscle. This is a muscle that is not voluntarily controlled. It normally holds the eyelid in the correct position while you are awake, but allows the upper lid to close when you become sleepy. Occasionally it also becomes stretched and fails to hold the eyelid in its normal open position. When this occurs, this muscle is approached from the eyeball side of the lid and shortened by removing a strip of conjunctiva and muscle from the back side of the lid.

The most common other problems of the eyelids usually concern the lower lid. These occur from either stretch of the lid itself or tightening of one of the layers of the lid. Of these, ectropion, eversion of the lower lid away from the globe, is most common. Mild forms can cause dry eye. More advanced forms cause chronic irritation of the lining of the eye and lid, with redness, swelling and occasionally even weeping. If left untreated, this can even cause blindness. This condition therefore needs to be treated early by simply taking out the excess lid length, adding tissue to replace scar, if this is the cause, or both.

The opposite is an entropion where the lid turns inward. Frequently the most symptomatic part of this is what is known as trichiasis, or irritation of the eyeball from the eyelashes scraping against the globe or cornea. This condition is usually from some type of scarring of the internal layers of the eyelid following some type of surgery or injury. Correction usually involves release of the scar and insertion a graft, to prevent recurrence.

Another very common problem of the eyelids is the presence of either malignant or nonma-

lignant lesions. Benign lesions generally require no treatment unless they are causing problems with function of the eyelid or are simply cosmetically undesirable. The one exception is verrucae, better known as warts. These lesions occur when a virus enters an otherwise benign lesion and begins growing. This can cause a very large, irritative lesion that can interfere with function of the lid, bleed, or become otherwise problematic. These are treated essentially like malignant lesions in order to make certain that all of the cells containing the virus are removed.

Premalignant and malignant lesions, however, such as actinic keratoses, basal cell epithelioma and squamous cell carcinoma, all do require treatment to prevent destruction of the eyelid. These are more easily treated on the loose upper eyelid skin. On the lower eyelid simple excision can cause ectropion or other functional abnormalities of the eyelid. Therefore, frequently a skin graft or flap which moves tissue from a looser area into the tighter lid may be necessary in order to prevent problems in lid function. This is one of the places where Moh's surgery is exceptionally useful. Moh's removes the lesion with very small margins and then makes certain by microscopic examination and further resection if necessary that no lesion remains. This allows removal of as minimal an amount of lid skin as possible. This procedure is done by a specially trained dermatologic surgeon. We then generally do the closure to assure that the eyelid continues to function properly.

Lesions near the lid margins are especially problematic because immediately under the skin at the margin is a thick, cartilaginous structure called the tarsus. Here the skin cannot simply be excised but requires grafting, a flap, or complete transection of the entire lid and tarsus in order to remove the lesion and close the defect.

In summary, there are many problems that can occur to the

eyelids. Some of those problems have multiple causes. When evaluating a problem, the underlying cause and the effect of the problem, or treatment thereof, on lid mechanics need to be determined in order to select the most rea-

sonable method for correcting the problem to prevent functional consequences.

Dr. Buchanan practices full time in highlands. For more information visit PlasticSurgeryTo

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• FIRE REPORTS •

Feb. 26

- At 11:48 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Mirror Lake Road.
- At 9:35 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to Main Street.

Feb. 27

- At 8:39 a.m., the dept. to a possible structure fire on US 64 west. It was a controlled burn.
- At 7:31 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Sages Woods Drive.

Feb. 28

- At 3:09 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at the hospital. It was due to a waterflow problem.

March 1

- At 7:16 p.m., and 7:50 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at the hospital. They were false.

March 2

- At 2:20 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Eastover Drive.

March 3

- At 9:36 a.m., the dept. responded to a tractor/trailer rollover on NC 106 near King Mountain.

March 5

- At 8:06 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Hickory Knut Gap. It was false.
- At 11:47 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at the hospital. It was false.

March 6

- At 3:05 p.m., the dept. responded to a call about an elevator malfunction.
- At 7:02 p.m., the dept. responded to a vehicle accident on NC 106. There were no injuries.

March 7

- At 9:19 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Cheyenne Drive.
- At 9:53 a.m., the dept. responded to a call for assistance at a residence on NC 106.

Christal Green and Merritt Shaw join Meadows Mountain Realty

Christal Green has lived in Highlands for the past 20 years, giving her a great understanding of the lay of the land, especially when it comes to the real estate market. A native of Charlotte, Christal feels truly blessed to live in such a magnificent place, especially since she loves the outdoors.

After receiving a BS in Communications (Speech Pathology) from Western Carolina University, Christal went immediately into the field of healthcare. After four years, Christal made the decision to be a homemaker to raise her four children, Chela, Griffin, Landon and Sadie. When they were old enough to go to school, Christal embarked on her career as a real estate agent. Starting out at Prestige Realty Group doing office administration, she quickly became licensed as a broker. Christal is very enthusiastic to join Meadows Mountain Realty. She is dedicated to finding the dream home for each individual or family that she works with. Christal has a reputation for being patient, hardworking,



Christal Green

Merritt Shaw

and upbeat. No matter what your needs for your dream home in the Western Carolina Mountains, Christal Green will go the extra mile to meet them.

Christal notes, "I am excited to be joining the Meadows Mountain Real Estate team. This company is a well established firm with many opportunities and I look forward to partnering with them for a successful future."

Merritt Shaw, formerly with Wildcat Cliffs Country Club as the Director of Membership Development, is dedicated to providing the ultimate in customer service working hand-in-hand with her clients, on their schedule, to help them find the home of their dreams as well as working hard for clients who want to sell their homes. Merritt is a hard worker and a "go-getter." You can trust that she will do her best to meet all of her client's real estate needs. Merritt states, "I look forward to seeing my buyer's faces when I have found the perfect home for them."

Merritt's background includes a paralegal degree, experience in procedures related to club membership and has unique knowledge in regard to the golf, tennis and country clubs in the Highlands-Cashiers area. If a client is looking for club membership to enhance the value of their new home, she can skillfully guide them through the process.

Merritt grew up in the area and earned her BS in Communications at Western Carolina University. After graduation, Merritt worked in the film business for several years, traveling all over the country experiencing great opportunities including work on "Nell," starring Liam Neeson and Jodie Foster. She met some amazing people (including her husband) and made lots of friends. When she and her husband decided to start a family, they moved back to this area because they knew the lush beauty and the small town culture of the Blue Ridge Mountains was the best place to raise their children.

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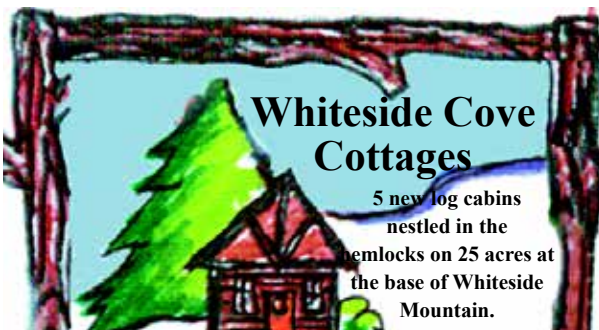
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...MAYOR continued from page 2

Now I know what some of you are now saying, "Mr. Mayor, you're so hard on parking offenders, lighten up!" So, it goes back to what commissioners and the Town

Manager discussed at the retreat. Either we have a parking ordinance with consequences, or have no ordinance at all. Voluntary compliance does not work.

• CLASSIFIEDS •

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YARD SALE

YARD SALE MARCH 15. 22 Oak St. Maternity, kids, adults, homegoods.

Our Town Manager, Bob Frye, has said the town can enforce a parking ordinance with a boot and tow truck. Reaction by some has been, "Oh, the horror of it!" Nevertheless, some towns like Boone, have used these enforcement measures. Why not Highlands? What about a three strikes and a tow policy? The first violation would be a small fine. If the violator refused to pay the fine and a second violation occurred, the police would place a big red tag on the drivers' door handle clearly stating that if fines remained unpaid, a third violation would result in the towing and the impoundment

of the vehicle. To get the vehicle, the offender would have to pay all the fines and the towing fee. Upon payment, an appeal to the Town Board could be requested.

My plan, albeit severe, may work. Conversely, having no parking ordinance at all may be an option, too. Somewhere in between these options hasn't worked.

A discussion about the parking issue is on the agenda for the next Town Board meeting on March 20. Citizens can present their concerns and ideas during the public comment period.

...HAVEN continued from page 9

"I attended the hearing held March 11, by the Macon County Board of Elections, on the challenge to Commissioner Haven's candidacy. Listening to the proceedings it became clear that the NC statutes regarding residency requirements for candidates and legal definitions of words like 'intent'

and 'domicile' are so flexible that continuing with my challenges would not be in anyone's interest," said Drummond. "Between now and the November election, Mr. Shields will have ample opportunity to explain his residency status to Macon County voters."

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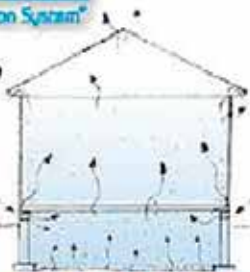
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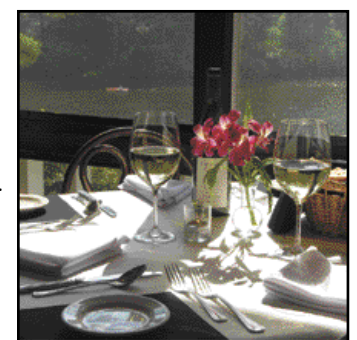
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