

Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., March 5, 2015

TB issues include zoning, sales tax, projects and more

Last week's Town Board meeting was reconvened with the reopening of the Public Hearing on the reaffirmation of the town's Zoning Map and Zoning Ordinances.

This was considered a

housekeeping exercise but the public was invited to speak. The public hearing was opened at the regular Town Board meeting on Feb. 19, but continued to Feb. 26 due to weather. No one spoke at the Feb. 26 hearing, but John

Shearl of J&J Lawn and Landscaping spoke on Feb. 19.

He said he disagreed with the zoning map and requested that the town reconsider split-zoning his parcel on NC 28 which has been the subject of numerous

court cases between him and the town. The part adjacent to the road is B-3 commercial and the part along the back is R-1 residential.

"It is practically impossible

•See TB page 8

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NCACC goals set

Commissioners travel to Washington to lobby for federal goals

Last week, Macon County Commissioners Kevin Corbin, Jim Tate, Ronnie Beale, and MC County Manager Derek Roland travelled to Washington DC for legislative meetings with Macon County's NC congressmen and senators to push for federal goals set by the NCACC.

Since Commissioner Beale is the president of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC), Macon County has a front row seat and has been very involved in defining and discussing federal goals that will affect Macon County.

The 2015 (FY16) federal priorities for NC counties that were discussed were:

- Support Remote Sales Tax Collection (Marketplace Fairness Act) - North Carolina and its counties are losing hundreds of

•See NCACC page 14

Highlands School writers win big



At the February MC Board of Education meeting, the state winners of the Western Mountains Reading Council Young Authors contest were announced. From Highlands were Blakely Moore, Kyle Iezzi, Emma Weller, and teacher Michelle Lane (Forever Young category). The Young Author Celebration is on March 19 in the cafeteria of Angel Medical Center, the winners at the local and state level will receive trophies/medals and will read their entries aloud.

Photo by Carol Bowen

New trail to Satulah Summit hits headwinds

At the hearing to discuss a new trail to access the Satulah Mountain summit Monday night at the Civic Center, representatives of the Highlands Plateau Greenway and the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust got an earful.

President of the Greenway, Ran Shaffner opened the meeting by explaining the reason for needing a new trail – homeowners who reside in the subdivision on the private portion of Worley Road don't want hikers driving to the trail head on their road. Therefore, the Greenway and Land Trust plan to access the summit via a new trailhead that would start from the Satulah Ridge neighborhood instead.

The Greenway is in the process of doing its due diligence regarding the purchase of two lots at the end of the dirt road at the end of a cul de sac in the subdivi-

•See SATULAH page 9

Project Lazarus to target prescription drug abuse

By Merritt N. Shaw

The 2014 State of the County Health Report recently released by Macon County Public Health highlighted a program called Project Lazarus. This program is

a grant source for county organizations to implement programs to make a difference in a growing problem of prescription drug overdoses that has plagued communities all around the country as

well as Macon County.

Project Lazarus was created on the belief that communities are ultimately responsible for their own health and that every

•See LAZARUS page 21

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Loss of sales tax revenue could be devastating

The budget planning process begins on March 9 with the Highlands Town Retreat.

The first budget challenge is estimating our projected revenues and how to allocate funds for projects and services. Tracking outside factors at the national, state and county levels is an important part of this process.

The economy at the national level seems to be on the rise.

With the recent county revaluations, the town will have to consider a small revenue neutral adjustment in the property tax rate in order to maintain the same funding level as last year.

At the state level the picture is not as clear. I recently spoke with Paul Meyer, the director of the North Carolina League of Municipalities. Highlands is a member of the league because it is an advocate for towns in the state legislature. Paul and I discussed several proposed bills that could negatively impact municipalities. For instance, our tree ordinance for commercial zones could be rescinded by state legislation in this session. Other municipal ordinances dealing with appearance and signs



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

are also under statehouse scrutiny.

A major concern we discussed was an evolving plan to redistribute sales tax revenues. In the past two years the state has been making a transition away from personal and corporate income taxes to relying more on sales tax revenue. Currently, the state is facing a budget shortfall estimated to be over \$200,000,000 more than what

the legislature projected. How can this shortfall be eliminated in a new state budget? Groups, like the League of Municipalities, are concerned that sales tax revenues, normally earmarked for towns and counties, will be reallocated to help soften the budget deficit.

Meyer informed me that the folks in Raleigh are looking at a new formula for distributing sale tax to towns and counties. Currently, Highlands gets about 2 cents of the 6.75 cents in sales tax collected on a dollar.

How does this impact the town budget? Last year the town received about \$870,000 in sales tax revenue from the state. The revenue source is about 20% of the general fund. Highlands has depended on this revenue stream, especially when it comes to doing infrastructure projects like the ones in recent years.

Meyer said that the legislature is looking at a per capita distribution formula that some legislators say is more equitable and directs more funds to big population areas that have critical needs, like Raleigh and Charlotte. The influx of new revenue to the large population centers would take pressure off some areas of the state budget.

But, he also pointed out what I already feared, that the per capita formula will not

• See MAYOR page 16

• FORUM •

Living with Bears

By Cynthia Strain, Chairwoman
B.E.A.R. Task Force

A lot of people have been talking about the bear that was shot and killed at a home in Highlands Falls CC a few weeks ago, after she and her cubs caused damage to the house, both indoors and underneath where they had denned up for the winter. There are many questions, but I'm afraid I don't have all the answers.

Justin McVey, wildlife biologist for N.C., reported that the sow was killed and buried. We don't know what happened to the yearling cubs, but he feels confident they could thrive on their own.

As for the homeowners being charged, apparently they were within their rights because of the damage the bears caused. Personally, I thought the bear would have to

threaten someone or be caught in the act of destroying property for it to be considered a justified killing, but evidently not. Whatever the law, it seems an awfully harsh sentence to kill the bear.

For the rest of us this comes as a wake-up call. What we can all do is become better equipped to prevent such a situation at our homes, or to deal with it in a non-lethal manner.

First a few facts. Black bears spend the winter in a dormant state but are not considered true hibernators. They neither eat, urinate nor defecate for several months, although if there is a stretch of mild weather they may wake up and look for food. They may even change den locations. The times of hibernation depend

• See FORUM page 3

• LETTERS •

About the Satulah Trail access

Dear Editor,

I read with interest the article about the Highlands Plateau Greenway (HPG) plans to build a trail to the summit of Satulah Mountain. It was followed by several letters to the editor concerning the subject. The dilemma about how to reach the top of the mountain has been discussed for many years, but to date no solution has been found despite the fact that the top of Satulah was bought by citizens of Highlands in 1909 and has been preserved for the use of all citizens of Highlands since that time. It is now under the keeping of the Highlands Cashiers Land Trust (HCLT) who steward the property. HCLT has purchased or been given additional acres that adjoin the original acquisition.

Unfortunately most of the citizens of Highlands are unable to reach the summit of Satulah and the additional adjoin-

ing properties because of the steep incline and the fact that part of Satulah Mountain Road is private and no vehicles are allowed. If one checks the demographics of Highlands, the average age of the residents is 59 years. To most that means that only the young and hearty can walk to see the view and the environment at the pinnacle; a walk of nearly 2 miles with an almost vertical incline. Additionally there is no parking at the base of the mountain, which makes the climb even more difficult as it must begin in the downtown area.

It is my understanding that the new trail to the top of the mountain from the planned parking area is only around ¼ of a mile. I commend the Greenway for developing a plan that will facilitate access to the top of Satulah Mountain for all who would like to see the splendor of rare native plants, enjoy vistas reaching into South Carolina and Georgia, and enjoy the cool mountain breezes that are constant on that iconic site.

Karen Kandl, Assistant Director of the Highlands Biological Station, said in her letter to the editor that students from all over the world come to study the flora and fauna of Satulah Mountain. The new trail would facilitate that venture. I agree with her wholeheartedly, and I would like

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Toll Free FAX: 866-212-8913

Phone: (828) 200-1371

Email:

HighlandsEditor@aol.com

Publisher/Editor: Kim Lewicki

Reporters: Merritt Shaw

Copy Editor: Glenda Bell

Digital Media - Jim Lewicki

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265 Oak St.; P.O. Box 2703,

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Letter Policy:

We reserve the right to reject or edit letters-to-the-editor. No anonymous letters will be accepted. Views expressed are not necessarily those of Highlands Newspaper.



...FORUM continued from page 2



An example of lattice around the base of a home that may deter bears from denning under it.
Photo by Cynthia Strain.

upon the weather and food availability, but in our area bears usually den early/mid-December to late March/early April.

Cubs are born in mid-winter and spend the next 18 months with their mother.

Bears typically hibernate in large, hollow, dead trees, under fallen trees, in holes dug at the base of trees, under brush piles or rock outcroppings. They line their dens with bark, grass, leaves or moss.

Denning under houses happens occasionally because it may fit their profile for a perfect denning spot. Normally they cause no problems, and they leave in the spring to head back to the woods. Some people just leave them alone, which is fine as long as you are sure the bear can't damage anything or get into the house. However, if you aren't one of those people, there are steps you can take to prevent bears from denning under your home.

Closing access is a necessity. Heavy-duty latticework made from cut 2x4's (see photo) worked for one family that purchased a house where a large bear had denned for several years. They also installed motion-activated lights under the house, and during their absence they play the radio inside for good measure (hoping bears are scared off by the sound of Steve Day's voice!).

Electric fencing is very effective, versatile and not costly. Heavily woven barbed-wire fencing can work, and night-lights and scarecrows have also been used.

According to Justin McVey, "I believe most times if areas under porches, decks, or homes are secure with lattice, and food sources are removed, bears will not take up residence."

If you have a denning bear in your crawl space, it can be chased away, but find an expert who knows how to do this

safely. Less aggressive (and safer) measures include lights, loud music, and using rags soaked in cider vinegar to convert their dark, quiet den into an inhospitable environment. Of course you must then close off all access to prevent its return. Locking all windows and doors as well as placing bars in the tracks of sliding glass doors are things to remember as well.

There is a good chance that the denning bear is a female with cubs, so be sure ALL the bears are out before closing everything off. It can be hard on a hibernating bear to suddenly be homeless, so choose a time when the weather isn't harsh.

The state of North Carolina does not relocate bears in these situations. There are many reasons, but one is that bears can go to great lengths to return, even several hundred miles, to their home.

You can read more about this in "Living With Bears" by Linda Masterson; at US Dept. of Agriculture website: www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/

or the Humane Society of the U.S. at: http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/resources/tips/scrapp_the_trap.html.

We humans are merely visitors here in the bears' world. As we encroach more and more on their habitat, we must learn to share, not destroy our forest and its inhabitants. A little tolerance and patience, plus some common sense and effort (like not attracting bears with garbage and birdseed) will make life easier for everyone.

Our brochures covering many aspects of living with bears are available at the Post Office, library, Chamber of Commerce and town hall.

For assistance with a specific problem, you may contact Justin McVey, Wildlife Biologist for NC Wildlife Resources Commission at (828) 273-7980.



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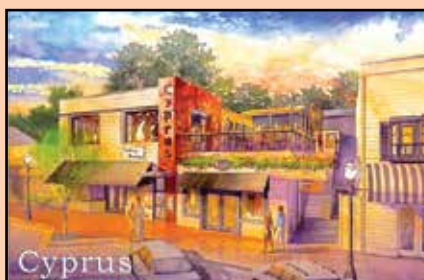
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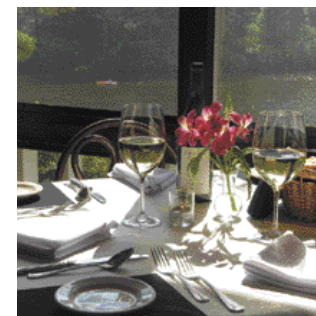


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...LETTERS continued from page 2

to see the Greenway proceed with building a trail to the top of Satulah, not only for environmental education students but for all who would like to enjoy what was given to them in 1909.

**Mercedes Heller
Highlands**

2014 Local School Finance Study is flawed

Dear Editor,

In the Highlands Newspaper's February 26 article on Macon County's school spending, statistics were quoted from a "2014 Local School Finance Study." The article failed to report that this study was from a Raleigh organization that lobbies the N.C. legislature on K-12 education issues. It appeared Commissioner Tate thought it was a state-issued report. The study was agenda-driven, and hardly a fair analysis.

The study reports, and the article defined, various metrics like "actual effort rank," "ability to pay rank," and "relative effort rank" purporting to rate N.C. counties on K-12 spending. The rankings relied primarily on a county's school spending compared to its property tax base.

Our county manager and commissioners wished using such metrics to determine county K-12 spending was that simple. The study treats schools as if they were the only function being funded by counties.

Superintendent Chris Baldwin uses the study, as its authors intended, and said "we [Macon County] have some room to increase revenue [taxes] in support of schools." That's easy for someone in a non-elected position to state, and is based on questionable metrics.

This paper duly notes that our county school administrators habitually complain about lack of funding. I'd be

concerned if that wasn't the case since it indicates taxpayers aren't providing TOO MUCH money for schools.

The study fails in numerous areas. It relies on the false premise that increasing education spending improves education outcomes, and conveniently fails to report state-reported school performance ratings versus school spending. The latest N.C. school report cards show just how sad student achievement is.

The study also fails to take into account total federal, state, and local spending on schools. Instead it concentrates on county spending. The article reported "2012-13 spending per student in Macon County was \$1,660.93." A reader could easily misunderstand, and not know that total spending on our county schools is around \$10,000 per student.

Financing of schools, and student performance are difficult issues, but this study does not provide any meaningful input for decision-makers.

**Vic Drummond
Franklin**

Town Off Duty

Dear Editor,

When I awoke last Tuesday to a snow covered landscape, the very first thing that came to mind was sledding. Not just because I have a six year old daughter but because no matter your age it's just fun.

Being so enthused, I drove into town to check out the condition of Monkey Hill. When I arrived at the bottom

• See LETTERS page 6



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...LETTERS continued from page 5



By mid-afternoon Wednesday, Feb. 25, the town announced that Monkey Hill wouldn't be plowed and would be open for sledding "At your own risk."
Photo by Jim Lewicki

of Hickory Street I could immediately tell that it had been plowed overnight. It had maybe half of an inch of new fallen snow on it; but the usual cones and flagging tape that have always been placed to block the road off (for

sledding purposes) were nowhere to be seen.

I was bummed, shocked and a touch heated on the matter. I waited till town hall was open and decided to give them a call. First I spoke with Bob Frye and he informed me that sledding down a street was dangerous and a liability for the town. After I expressed my feelings on the plowing of Monkey Hill, he apologized that I was unhappy with the matter but sledding down a street was a liability for the town.

Later in the morning I spoke with Pat Taylor, our Mayor on duty, and he too confirmed that the town is in the clutches of fear. Fear of litigation that if someone got hurt sledding they would come after the town. "What if someone lived on that street?" he said to me, "would they be denied a clear street so you can go sledding?"

Yes, what if someone lived in one of the seasonal homes on Hickory Street, but they don't. What if someone did get hurt sledding? What if? What if? What if? What if the town did not plow the street? What if the newspapers, parents and children of Highlands did not start calling town hall all that day Tuesday?

What if we just sat idly by and let fear-mongering take a Highlands tradition and toss it out the window based on hypothetical scenarios?

Well, thankfully we did not just accept that this was okay for the town to do. We all called. The newspapers called. WLOS called and came to Town. And in the end, the town officials agreed that they would not plow the portion of Hickory Street referred to as Monkey hill.

But, it would be unfair of me not to mention that town officials proposed an alternate sled run. There is a portion of the Highlands Plateau Greenway known as "The Sled Run" and it is under construction. The trail starts on Oak Street by the pavilion at the top of the hill, and connects to the Rec Park loop and Oak Lane area of the Greenway.

This is a trail with switchbacks and stairs surrounded by trees growing close to the trail itself. Not your idyllic opportunity for sledding.

I spoke with a few longtime Highlands residents and they confirmed that sledding took place there once upon a time, when it was more of an open straight shot and less like a trail. It would seem that if the town officials were concerned with people being injured while sledding they would not encourage racing down a trail with stairs and switchbacks (and did I mention all the trees at close proximity?).

But the reality, as I see it mind you, was not fear for the people's safety but the town's safety.

"Sled at your own risk" is the last thing Pat Taylor said to me on the matter.

So we did and it was great!

Matthew Chrestman
Highlands

Newer generation labeled as 'None' & God is Dead

Dear Editor,

When I was a young man in college, trying to expand my horizons with broader thinking and new ideas. I entered this environment a bit naive in not understanding the thinking of the late '60s and early '70s. The norm for the younger generation was to question authority and the

culture of the past. The Vietnam war had gone on for too long and I along with many didn't fully understand it but too late realized that in pulling out we left many to die at the hands of a brutal regime.

These were some of the issues within the college culture. In addition, the thought was that God was dead. If you're around 50 or less you may not relate to this because you were within part of this cultural shift.

I found myself as a Christian in a very uncomfortable environment. My professor at the time was anti-God, and said belief was just wishful thinking. This was the thinking of Friedrich Nietzsche, which made known the "God is Dead" philosophy, and he himself was a Christian, turned atheist, and eventually died from mental illness. No one really seems to know what exactly caused him to lose his faith, then fight so hard against it. But this thinking, although in different forms, has always been with us. I also, but not to the same extent, seemed to lose or questioned my faith during a time of questioning.

Not very long ago I overheard a news commentator state that this generation coming up is known as the "none" generation -- meaning nothing, emptiness, a void, no foundation for life and living. I for one refuse to believe this coming generation is a "none" or nothing generation. But if God is truly dead then there is no other conclusion we can come to -- we too are dead even though we live.

I had stated earlier that I had questioned my Christian beliefs but realized this was an impossible and unsustainable view to keep and that God is not dead, but alive and His fingerprints are all around and within us.

As Lee Strobel an agnostic (questioning gods existence) journalist, turn Christian, has stated, "... if I would have to believe that nothing produces everything; non-life produces life; randomness produces fine-tuning; chaos produces information; unconsciousness produces consciousness; and non-reason produces reason. Then non-sense is viewed as meaningful."

If God is dead, and we are "none" or nothingness, where is life's meaning -- is anything worth living for, or worth dying for? Doesn't the world seem lost, more divided and frustrating? What hope is there that I can pass to my daughter considered by some as part of the "none" or nothingness generation? We being human, should value life more than this -- but value only comes from God -- not from nothingness. Keep thinking.

Deni Shepard
Franklin

Our property rights matter, too

Dear Editor,

We wanted to make you aware of some information that was not covered in the two letters property owners have received from the Highlands Greenway Trail organization. We are writing this letter because our home and the following lots, #44 - Martha Hester, #45&48 - Richard Moyer, #49&50- Chauncey Mellor, will be the most directly impacted by a parking lot and trail on Satulah Ridge Rd.

We would like to assure all that we support the Highlands Land Trust and Highlands Greenway's work in the Highlands and Cashiers area. We sincerely want them to

• See LETTERS page 15



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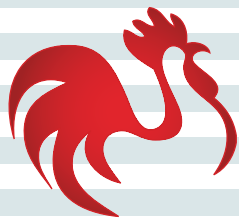
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...TB continued from page 1

to use the land shown as residential for residential purposes because it is significantly less than the .75 acres required for a residential dwelling in the R-1 zoning district," he said. "There is no building envelope when you take into account the size of the area, the 25-ft. setback from the 45-ft. road right-of-way and the 10-ft. building setbacks from property lines or room for a septic system to support a dwelling due to the topography of the property. You are leaving me without any reasonable value for my property."

He said the only reasonable use for the property is the ongoing commercial parking and storage which has been part of his business since November 1993.

He went on to say that there isn't another property in the town of Highlands that is split zoned 130 feet in width commercial and the rest residential.

"Please reconsider the split zoning of the property with objectivity and leave me some practical use," he said.

The board heard his request but unanimously accepted the zoning map and ordinances as they now stand.

In the Mayor's report, Mayor Pat Taylor said he was keeping in touch with Advanced HydroPower who promised Highlands would be kept in the loop concerning developments of the proposed

hydroelectric plant on the Cullasaja River.

He has also sent a letter to Macon County regarding financing of the Highlands School Resource Officer.

He said through communication with Paul Meyer, executive director of the NC League of Municipalities, the state has its sights on municipalities and legislation in the pipeline which may alter zoning regulations regarding signs, tree ordinances and more and could affect Highlands' Zoning Ordinance.

Most disturbing is the state's sights on sales tax revenue.

Due to the state's budget deficit, it is looking at ways to redistribute sales tax revenue – potentially based on population.

"This could deeply affect Highlands," said Taylor.

Town Manager Bob Frye said Highlands currently gets about \$850,000 in sales tax revenue per year but that could be cut by \$750,000.

"There is no account for seasonality regarding population," said Frye.

Later Macon County Commissioners weighed in.

Chair Kevin Corbin said he would obviously be very opposed to such a move.

"Macon County gets about \$5 million in sales tax revenue and it is our sec-

•See TB page 17

• HS SPORTS •

Varsity Basketball

Tuesday, Feb. 10, the teams travelled to Hiwassee Dam.

The Lady Highlanders lost 62-31. Ann Marie Crowe was the leading scorer with 16 points.

The boys also lost 64 to 51. Brent Amundrud was the leading scorer with 21 points.

On Friday, Feb. 13, the teams travelled to Blue Ridge School.

The Lady Highlanders played a very exciting and intense game. They led in score for most of the game, but Blue Ridge came back to tie the game with seconds left on the clock.

The Lady Highlanders pulled out the win with a three-point shot from Madison Lloyd ending with a score of 47 to 44.

Ann Marie Crowe was the leading scorer with 10 points and April Moss had 9 points.

The boys also played an exciting game at Blue Ridge, but lost 53 to 50 which ended their season.

Due to weather conditions, the Little Smokey mountain conference games were cancelled. The Lady Highlanders went straight into state playoffs. Their first round game was home against Blue Ridge on Tuesday, Feb. 24.

In another intense game against Blue Ridge, the girls were down as many as 9 points, but with key free throws from April Moss and Madison Lloyd, the team rallied back to secure the game with a 44 to 41 score.

On Monday, March 2, the girls travelled to play Winston-Salem Prep in the second round of games, however, they lost and ended their season. The score wasn't available by press time.

– Sierra Nylund

• HIGHLANDS EVENTS •

Ongoing

• Church of the Incarnation and the First Presbyterian Church are collecting food items for the Highlands Emergency Council and the Food Pantry. Drop off boxes are in the Ravenel Room at First Presbyterian and in the downstairs lobby at the Church of the Incarnation. Monetary donations also accepted. Make checks out to Highlands MountainTop Rotary.

• The Cub and Boy Scouts of America have three drop offs for worn and tattered flags. They properly retire them. Drop offs at Highlands Doors and Windows 2242 Dillard Road, the Highlands Fire Station or Highlands United Methodist Church office. Contact Phil Potts for more information 828 526-3719

Thurs.-Sun.

• Movies at the Playhouse:Thurs-Sunday. 2, 5 & 8 p.m. Call 526-2685 for weekly movie.

Monday

• Shortoff Baptist Church hosts a non-denominational Men's Meeting the first Monday night of each month at 7 pm and all men are invited to attend.

First Tuesdays

• FAMILY and Caregiver Support Group Meets: for Individuals that have a friend, family member or loved one living with mental illness. Learn how peers deal with stress and emotional overload. First Tuesday of Every Month 7-8 pm. Call Ann for more info (828) 369-7385

Tuesdays

• Reading dog "Beebles" will be at Hudson Library every Tuesday at 3:30pm. Please call (828)526-3031 to register.

• Free Community Table Dinner at the Community Bldg. at 6p.

• Zumba at the Rec Park at 8:05a. \$5.

Starting Tues., Feb. 24

• 12-week NAMI Program to educate families dealing with mental illness, 6:30 to 8:30p. The course has the dual focus of education, and understanding the experience of living with mental illness. Confidentiality is maintained. Class size is limited and pre-registration required. Contact: Ann 369-7385 or Linda 369-9838

Mon., Wed., Fri.

• Heart Healthy Exercise Class Monday, Wednesday and Friday 8:30am-9:30am

• Aerobics with Tina Rogers 8-9a.

• Zumba at the Rec Park at 9:05a. \$5

Wednesdays

• First Baptist Church is happy to present a new season of X-treme Games at the Highlands Rec. Park. The games will be held Wednesday nights from 6 to 7:15 pm. For more information or to pre-register your k-6th grade child, please call 526-4153.

1st Wednesdays

• Family Movies at the Hudson Library at 3:30pm. Call 828-526-3031 for titles.

3rd Wednesdays

• General Audience Movies at Hudson Library at 2pm. Call 828-526-3031 for titles.

Thursdays

• Yoga at the Rec Park 8:15 a.m. \$6 per class.

• Storytimes with Miss Carol at Hudson Library 10:40am. Open to the public.

• Highlands Writers' Group meets every Thursday from 1-3:30 pm at Hudson Library. Writers of all genres welcome. For info call 526-8009 or 526-2295.

• NAMI Support Group for individuals dealing with mental illness: depression, bipolar, schizophrenia, etc. and the family members of individuals dealing with these challenges from 7 – 8:15 pm. Call Donita for more info (828) 526-9510.

2nd Thursdays

• Sapphire Valley Needlepoint Guild meets at the Highlands Rec Park at 10 a.m. Newcomers welcomed.

Last Fri. of each month

• Weight Watchers support group meets every Thursday at 6pm at the Cashiers Community Center. Questions? Call Lisa 828-506-3555.

• Community Coffee with Mayor Pat Taylor from 11a to noon at The Hudson Library.

Sundays

• At the Mountain Laurel Tennis Club at 4:30 pm. Multi-denominational, Interactive Bible Study and Fellowship.

Wednesdays March 4-25

• Marriage Tuneup. 7 p.m. at Church of the Valley in Cashiers. Call 743-5470.

Thurs. March 5

• The North Carolina Democratic Party will hold annual precinct organizational meetings in Macon County on Thursday at 6 PM. The Highlands Precinct will meet at the Civic Center/Rec Park. The Meeting is free and open to any registered Democrat residing in the Highlands Precinct.

Fri., March 6

• The High Mountain Squares will host their "St Pattie's Day Dance," Friday night at the Macon County Community Building, GA Road (441 South), Franklin NC from 6:30 to 9p PM. Marty Northrup from Columbus, NC will be the caller. We dance Western Style Square Dancing, main/stream and plus levels. Everyone is welcome. For information call 828-371-4946, 828-342-1560, 828-332-0001.

Sat., March 7

• HIGHLANDS EVENTS •

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a strenuous 10-mile loop hike with elevation change 1000 ft. on Appletree Trail to Laurel Branch, returning on the Bartram Trail to Appletree Group Campground beyond Nantahala Lake. Meet at Westgate Plaza at 8:30 a.m. drive 45 miles round trip. Call leader Dave Barbour, 828-356-6078, for reservations. Hike is limited to NHC members only and a limit of five dogs.

Monday, March 9

• The Battle of Sugartown Chapter of the North Carolina Society, Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), will hold its monthly meeting at 11:30 in the Boiler Room Restaurant at 1024 Georgia Road in Franklin. All DAR members and prospective members are welcome. For further information, please contact 828-369-3136 or 828-524-2673.

Thurs., March 12

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a strenuous 10.7-mile hike, elevation change 2200 ft., to Blood Mountain, highest point on the Appalachian Trail in Georgia and one of the Dirty Dozen Wilderness Hikes. Good views from Big Cedar Mt. and Blood Mountain. Stone shelter built by the CCC in the 1930s. Meet at West Gate Plaza at 8 am, drive 164 miles round trip. Call leader Diana Otero, 765-318-9981, for reservations. Limit of eight hikers, no dogs please.

Sat., March 14

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a strenuous 7-mile hike, elevation change 1500 ft., from Deep Creek Campground to Noland Divide in the Smoky Mountains Park, continuously uphill to Lonesome Pine with spectacular views at Beaufort Ridge. Meet at Bi-Lo parking lot in Franklin at 9:00 am, drive 70 miles round trip. Call leader Gail Lehman, 828-524-5298, for reservations. Visitors welcome, no dogs please.

Sat., March 14

• The Annual Convention of the Macon County Republican Party will be held on Saturday at the Robert C. Carpenter Community Building in Franklin. The theme of this year's event is "Young Mountain Voices," featuring young civic leaders from Macon County. Keynote speaker is Nick Vaughn, former president of North Carolina Teenage Republicans, and student at Wingate University. Registration begins at noon. Precinct Meetings begin at 12:45, followed by convention business. All registered Republicans and Macon County teenagers may attend. maconcountyrepublicans@gmail.com

Sun., March 15

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take

an easy 2-mile hike, with 200 ft. elevation change, exploring historic Tessentee Farms, a property supervised by the Land Trust with an 1800 farm house, forest and open field trails, wildlife, birds, and a white walnut tree plantation. Meet at the Smoky Mtns. Visitor Center in Otto at 2:00 pm, drive 6 miles round trip. Call leader Kay Coriell, 369-6820. Visitors welcome, no dogs please.

March 20

• All Jackson County voters registered as Republicans by January 31st 2015 are invited to attend the Jackson County Republican Annual Convention at the Heritage Room at the Jackson County Senior Center, 100 County Services Park in Sylva. Registration begins at 5 PM at the Senior Center and will close at 6:30 PM. Those attendees registered as Republicans also will qualify to be one of the 27 delegates and 27 alternates to the upcoming conventions. Precinct meetings begin promptly at 5:30 PM followed by a full buffet dinner prepared by the Senior Center Chef and his staff. For more information call Jackson County Republican Chair Ralph Slauhter at 828 743-6491 or email jacksonctygop@yahoo.com

Sat., March 21

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate-to-strenuous 5.5 mile hike with elevation change of 3400 ft. to Mt. Sterling in the Smoky Mountains Park for outstanding views of the Pigeon River Gorge. Meet at Waynesville Ingles at 9 am, drive 80 miles round trip from Waynesville. Call leader Keith Patton, 828-456-8895, for reservations. Visitors welcome, no dogs please.

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a strenuous 10.2-mile hike, elevation change 1300 ft. to Middle Prong Wilderness Loop, one of the Dirty Dozen Wilderness Hikes using Haywood Gap Trail, Buckeye Gap Trail and the Mountains to Sea Trail off the Blue Ridge Parkway. Meet in the old WalMart parking lot near KFC at 8 am, drive 60 miles round trip. Call leaders Bill and Sharon Van Horn, 828-369-1983, for reservations. Limit of eight hikers. No dogs please.

Sun., March 22

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 2-mile hike, elevation change 150 ft., on the Bartram Trail from Wallace Branch, along the stream past a small waterfall, returning on a Forest Service Rd. Call leader Jean Hunnicutt, 828-524-5234, for reservations. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin at 2 pm. Drive 6 miles round trip. Call leader Jean Hunnicutt, 828-524-5234, for reservations. Visitors welcome, no dogs please.

...SATULAH continued from page 1

sion and have until March 15 to complete the process at which time the sale will be final.

The parcels will be combined to provide a parking area for a minimum of four vehicles and a maximum of eight vehicles.

About a month ago, 42 landowners on Satulah Ridge Road were sent a letter and asked to log their concerns both for and against the proposition.

As it turns out, some of the property owners of the Satulah Ridge subdivision present at the meeting have the same concerns as those on Worley Road – they don't want their lifestyle altered by hikers seeking the trail and many worry about further intrusion to the environment of the mountain by constructing a trail.

After 10 years of negotiating with homeowners on the private portion of Worley Road where everything from turning the road over to the town so that it's public, to erecting a gate accessible via a fee-based key card (free to property owners beyond the gate) with the money going to maintain the road, to entering discussions again while seeking a peaceful compromise were all discussed.

Griffin Bell was the one who suggested entering into discussions again.

"Right now, the best and easiest way to get to the summit is by Worley Road. It's easier for older people and there are already two trails to the summit one much harder than the other. It's unnecessary to put a third four-foot wide trail on the mountain," he said. "The Land Trust's mission statement speaks of keeping the land beautiful and healthy among other things. Putting another trail represents a form of pressure on the mountain."

Attorney Richard Melvin contends that all of Worley Road is public, not private as claimed by the property owners of the subdivision near the top.

"Just because someone puts a sign up doesn't mean it's right," he said. "Public means anyone in the public can use it; private means anything less than that and not open to all."

Shaffner said unfortunately, the doors are shut on all negotiations with the property owners on the private part of Worley Road.

"We have been looking for an alternative because we would prefer not to have to spend this money (about \$300,000 to purchase the property) and build the trail," he said.

The town was asked to take over the upper portion of the road but not only would it need to be widened, which the residents didn't want, but 100% agreement

was necessary from those in the subdivision.

According to the Jim Green of the Land Trust out of the nine lots along the private portion, five said OK, three said no and one wasn't contacted.

Gary Wein, executive director of the Land Trust, said the town doesn't want the road in its current state and money offered by a homeowner to repair the road was turned down by other homeowners.

"They believe driving on the road violates their privacy and they don't want any hikers driving to the parking area at the top ... period," he said.

Comments from Satulah Ridge homeowners in favor of the new trail include:

Am addition of a trail within the Greenway system; unencumbered access to a favorite site in Highlands is needed; the walk from Satulah Ridge subdivision will be shorter and reasonable for homeowners; the two lots will add protected green space to a beautiful subdivision; it's a tradition – people have climbed Satulah for many, many years and deserve access; people who walk the Greenway care about Highlands and won't intentionally litter or damage the mountain; the existence of the Greenway Trail and more green space will increase property values; many people carpool to the Satulah trailhead now so that is likely to continue; a trail to the top of Satulah will greatly benefit the public; the Greenway trails will be extended to the south side of Highlands; older folks need a shorter route to Satulah than walking from the middle of town; Highlands benefits from the beauty that can be found and enjoyed along its trails; police could patrol the road and parking area; a sign could be erected about limited parking; and students need access to study the rare plants on the summit.

Disapproval was based on the following concerns:

Increased traffic flow on a road that can't handle two cars in most places; increased potential for traffic accidents and injury to homeowners, including their pets; dangers from speeding cars or trucks along one-lane road; wear and tear on the road at a rapid rate; increased air and noise pollution from additional traffic, including trucks and motor cycles; high potential of trespassing and vandalism by persons who aren't residents; high potential for increase of littering; loss of privacy and tranquility in the subdivision; increase of motorcycle traffic brought via twitter, face book, advertising on the internet; campers might leave cars in the parking space overnight;

Spring Home Improvement

Time-Saving Spring Cleaning Tips for Your Home's Outdoor Spaces

(StatePoint) It's time to prep your home's outdoor spaces for the season ahead. From the yard to the garage to the deck, getting these areas tidy is all part of a thorough spring clean.

Here are some tips to make the process faster and easier.

De-Clutter Your Workspace

Your shed, your garage, your toolbox -- it's time to take stock of what

you're storing in these key areas. Broken tools, piles of junk -- these are items that will get in your way and slow you down all season long. So before you get to the nitty gritty of your outdoor spring

clean, take the time to organize your workspace.

Throw out what is junk, donate what you aren't using, and organize the rest into categories. Vertical storage can save crucial room, so install tall shelves and use walls and the ceiling to install organizational systems. Now is also a great opportunity to perform routine maintenance on your lawn equipment and tools to improve their efficiency.

Identify Multitasking Tools

Check out innovations on old tools that can make your versatile workload easier. For example, you can upgrade your conventional pressure washer for a newer model with more diverse functionality. For example, Briggs & Stratton's new POWERflow+ Pressure Washer technology has one pump with two separate cleaning modes -- high pressure and high flow, which work for different tasks.

Remember, different surfaces require different cleaning techniques. Whether you're cleaning up tough mold and mildew stains from your deck or patio or wash-



ing the more delicate surface of your car, you can switch modes or apply soap directly from the nozzle. This feature eliminates the need for switching attachments or walking back to the pressure washer, making an afternoon of diverse to-dos manageable. Just be sure you're using the proper mode for the task. Tips and instructional videos can be found at www.PowerFlowPlus.com.

Do Smart Yard Maintenance

If you have a larger yard, consider a riding mower to save time and energy on lawn maintenance. Remember not to over mow your lawn. Not only is it not healthy for the grass, it can be a time suck and increase

your carbon footprint needlessly. Likewise, only water your lawn and garden when necessary. During periods of rain, you can ease up on this chore. The most efficient times of day to water your lawn are morning. When the sun is strongest, you will lose more water to evaporation and your work will be for naught. By changing up your lawn care habits, you can save time all season.

While working outdoors can be fun, don't spend more time than you need to on your household spring cleaning tasks. Finding simple ways to be more efficient will give you more time to enjoy your home's outdoor spaces.

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Spring Home Improvement

Upgrade Your Fireplace to Improve Energy Efficiency

(StatePoint) Heating and cooling your home typically comprises nearly half of the average American's utility bill, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Unfortunately, a portion of that expenditure is lost.

While most homeowners know that insulating, patching and weatherizing can reduce heat loss, there is one major energy eater in your home that you may not have considered -- that charming staple of dens, family rooms and anywhere people gather: the fireplace.

Traditional masonry style wood-burning fireplaces are a leading source of indoor air loss and draft, even more so than windows and doors.

"Traditional wood fireplaces have a lot of charm, but unfortunately, they can be inefficient even when they aren't in use," says Becky Scribner, brand director at Heat & Glo, a leading manufacturer of gas and wood fireplaces, stoves and inserts.

However, you don't



need to sacrifice your fire this winter to lower your bill -- in fact, it's possible to convert your fireplace into an energy efficient heat source with the following tips:

- Don't send your hard earned money up and out the chimney. When your fireplace is not in use, make sure your chimney damper is closed. You may also install a flue sealer, which is an affordable, inflatable stopper that fits below the damper to fur-

ther seal off the chimney.

- Ensure your chimney and fireplace is inspected, maintained and cleaned annually. A contractor can ensure the job is done safely and thoroughly.

- Add doors or a cover to the front of your fireplace to help reduce the draft and add a nice aesthetic.

- Consider a gas fireplace insert. In addition to lowering your energy bills and generating more radiant heat,

they're cleaner to maintain -- no ash, soot, or smoke -- and are low maintenance, turning on and off with the flip of a switch. Plus, a new insert like the Escape from Heat & Glo looks great and uses energy-saving firebox technology to increase efficiency. Learn more about the benefits of a gas fireplace insert at www.heatnglo.com/Rekindle.

- For those who love the smell, crackle and process of building a

real fire, don't despair. Pellet and EPA-certified wood inserts can be an easy, clean and efficient alternative as well.

In the pursuit of

energy-efficiency, don't say goodbye to tradition. Instead, give your fireplace a much needed upgrade.



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Spring Home Improvement

Building a Pro Kitchen for Less

(StatePoint) You may not get paid for your culinary efforts at home, but you can still treat yourself to a professionally outfitted kitchen. If the idea of financing this upgrade has held you back in the past, consider different options that can help you affordably transform your ordinary space into the kitchen of your dreams.

Amazing Countertops

If you've longed for luxury granite countertops, consider quartz, which offers the same beauty as granite at a fraction of the cost. Since quartz is a durable, non-porous material, countertops will be easy to clean and maintain over time, and resistant to the nicks and stains caused by everyday wear and tear, making it a sound long-term investment.

Quartz is available in a variety of colors and patterns, and by investigating your options you can get the look and feel that complements your kitchen.

Professional Range

To ensure you're never limited as a cook, start by upgrading your cooking appliances, which are at the

heart of any kitchen. One versatile range option that delivers top-of-the-line professional performance at a consumer-friendly price is the Verona Dual Fuel or all gas range, available in 24, 30 and 36 inch sizes. Sealed burners pack plenty of BTU power, delivering pinpoint accuracy and flame control for optimal heat transfer. As a result, foods cook quickly and evenly with less fuel than standard burners.

Verona ranges are equipped with full-width storage compartments, as well as European convection ovens that circulate heated air for more consistent temperature, allowing you to prepare your meals faster than with a conventional oven.

Inspired by professional-style Italian design, Verona ranges can be tailored to suit your kitchen décor, with custom options such as round oven handles, island trims and



brilliant colors. Whether you prefer the professional look of stainless steel or a bolder palette such as burgundy, white, antique white or matte black, make your kitchen pop both visually and functionally with the right pro-style range. More information can be found at <http://veronaappliances.com>.

Task Lighting

Task lighting can be a gorgeous, functional addition to any kitchen. And these days, beautiful fixtures can be purchased at any price point and come in a number of styles, both traditional and contemporary, making it easy to add flair

and style to your kitchen in a way that meets your taste. In addition to your ambient lighting, consider installing a row of task lights over your kitchen island, above your sink, and in or other key areas where you do the most cooking prep -- after all, this is how the pros do it.

Equipping your kitchen with the functionality and beauty that a professional chef enjoys does not need to break the bank. Operating with a conservative budget, you can make long-lasting improvements to your kitchen that are stunning, functional and affordable.



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Spring Home Improvement

Is Your Yard Wildlife-Friendly?

(StatePoint) Being a good neighbor means more than being friendly to the humans across the street, it also means being friendly to the animals in your yard. Making your yard a safe place for local wildlife should be a top lawn care priority.

With that in mind, here are some tips for creating a healthy habitat for local critters.

Be a Valuable Rest Stop

Stock your garden with small native species of trees, shrubs and flowers to give wildlife needed nourishment, as well as cover from predators.

A source of water can also be a great resource for visiting fauna. Whether it's a pond or a bird bath, be sure this zone is well-maintained so you don't inadvertently create a haven for unwanted species. In the warmer months when mosquitoes are most active, you should change the bird bath water even more often.

Promote Safety

A bird feeder in your backyard, full of water and seeds, will be the perfect invitation for beautiful migrating and local birds to stop by.

Just be sure your property is safe for birds. Unfortunately, birds don't see clear glass. As a result, millions of birds die every year by striking glass. Don't let your sliding glass doors or other windows become a death trap for birds.

To protect birds,



apply special decals that reflect ultraviolet sunlight. For example, those from WindowAlert have the appearance of frosted glass, but glow like a stoplight for birds, so you don't have to compromise your own view out your window. The brand also makes a high-tech liquid called WindowAlert UV Liquid, which should be applied between decals.

"Wildlife can beautify your garden and be a sign that your yard is healthy" says Spencer Schock, founder of WindowAlert. "But birds and other wildlife need food, shelter, and safety."

Get out the binoculars! With a few small actions, you can make your yard or garden a wildlife refuge.



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...NCACC continued from page 1

millions of dollars annually in sales tax revenues through untaxed remote sales. State estimates project an N.C. loss of nearly \$122 million annually, with losses growing faster than the overall retail tax base. Collecting remote sales taxes is not new tax or a tax increase; these revenues are actually already due and payable by law.

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making authority and contribute to reductions to the economic prosperity and workforce of North Carolina's Counties.

- Protect Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Social Services Block Grants, Food and Nutrition Service Programs, and the Public Health Fund - Counties are the first responders providing health and human services to the public and, in particular, our nation's vulnerable populations - children, elderly and the chronically ill. Many of these services are also mandated by federal law and therefore the federal government provides funding to assist states and local communities in meeting the demand for these services. The populations that these programs help serve do not diminish with reductions in, or elimination of, federal assistance, and thus counties are forced to make up the difference.

- Support Federal Funding for Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools; Cooperative Extension Programs; Broadband Access in Rural Areas; Community Development Block Grants (CDBG); and Set-Asides for County Infrastructure Projects - In both rural and urban areas North Carolina counties throughout the state rely on the federal-local partnership that supports community and economic development and public infrastructure. In recent years, the partnership, and the economic vitality of NC counties, has been threatened when efforts to trim the federal budget have targeted these local government programs.

- Support Realistic, Fair, and Enforceable Immigration Reform - While immigration is a federal responsibility, counties are directly affected by immigration. Counties are required by law to provide emergency health, free elementary and secondary education, and public safety to everyone regardless of immigration status. North Carolina Counties request that Congress address and pass reasonable reforms to US immigrations policy that will better assist counties in delivering services to citizens.

- Oppose Expansion of Federal Control Under the Clean Water Act - The EPA's proposal to redefine "waters of the U.S." should be withdrawn until further analysis and more in-depth consultation with state and local officials can be completed. NC Counties own water quality systems and other infrastructure like roadside ditches, stormwater systems, green infrastructure and drinking water facilities. The current proposal will substantially increase the cost of permitting and cause significant harm to farmers, businesses and landowners.

- Preserve Tax-Exempt Status of Municipal Bonds - Tax-exempt bonds were written in the first tax code in 1913 and are a well-established financing tool. They are predominantly issued by state and lo-

cal governments, which are responsible for 75% of all public facilities and infrastructure. The interest exemption incentives investors to invest in these securities. Without the exemption, the expense of financing capital needs will increase sharply, prohibiting the construction of many infrastructure projects and leading to additional state and local taxes.

- Support Increased Funding for Military and Veterans Programs, Including Impact Aid and Support Services for Veterans - North Carolina is proud to be one of the most military friendly states in the nation. With that distinction, however, also comes responsibility to care for the men, women and their families while they bravely serve and when they return. NC counties cannot afford to bear that responsibility alone.

- Support reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and increased appropriations to LWCF and the State Assistance Program - The Land and Water Conservation Fund and its State Assistance Program are paid for with fees and permits from Outer Continental Shelf drilling. The only federal program supporting state and local parks and outdoor recreation, LWCF is set to expire in 2015 and must be reauthorized by Congress. LWCF, and State Assistance in particular, also receive far less annually than authorization levels allow even though the Fund has a dedicated funding source because the funding is diverted to other purposes outside of what the law intended.

- Support the Field EMS Innovation Act - The legislation (H.R. 809/S. 2400 in 113th Congress) amends the Public Health Service Act to designate the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as the primary federal agency for emergency medical services (EMS) and trauma care. It establishes the Office of EMS and Trauma within HHS and gives it responsibilities related to EMS.

- Support Legislation to End Human Trafficking - According to the U.S. Government, thousands of women, men and children are trafficked to the United States for purposes of sexual and labor exploitation. An unknown number of U.S. citizens and legal residents are trafficked within the country, too, and the State of North Carolina is no exception. NC Counties support legislation that takes action against human trafficking.

MC Commission Chair Kevin Corbin said as a member of the Legislative Goals Committee he was in the "front seat" and in some ways the driver's seat to influence goals sent to Washington and Raleigh.

"I pushed hard for language asking

• See NCACC page 17

• INVESTING AT 4,118 FT. •

What to do when you inherit a house

The host of the new story-driven reality series called *Strange Inheritance*, Jamie Colby, recently weighed in on the top seven things you should do when you inherit a home which was quite interesting:

1. Check the title. Make sure that the ownership is in the name it is intended so that it is freely transferable to you.

2. Make sure there are no liens against the property. If work has been done over the years on the property or it was given as collateral against any loan, there may be banking institutions or individuals that have a claim against your inheritance. You will want to research this and have the estate settle any claims before you consider or attempt to sell, lease or transfer title to the property.

3. Have a home inspection. Homes held in the same family for years may need some deferred maintenance issues addressed. This will enhance the value and your enjoyment if you keep it.

4. If you are refurbishing or selling your inheritance, there are small things you can do to enhance the value. A fresh paint job, an upgrade of furniture, fresh flowers and improvement of the landscaping will increase the appeal of your new asset.



Jody Lovell
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5. Modernize where you can. Updating a kitchen or bathroom or even flooring can make a huge difference in how a property appears to others. Even small changes such as drawer handles and doorknobs can revamp the look of a property and bring it up to date.

6. Contact a broker or have an appraisal. For tax purposes, you will need an opinion of the value of the home at the time of death. Some accountants will accept a Bro-

ker-Price-Opinion or some will require an appraisal. Consult an attorney to learn of any taxes you may owe as a result of your home inheritance.

7. Check the attic and basement. The garage and attic may hold hidden treasures that you and your family may have forgotten about or never known. There may be long-forgotten baseball cards, comic books, coins, and other valuable items hidden away by loved ones and not necessarily detailed in a will.

Happy hunting and home-owning!

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...LETTERS continued from page 6

find a way to access the approximately 67 acres and summit of Satulah Mountain for all the people to enjoy forever.

However, we would urge them to consider a long term plan which accommodates the growth projections and tourist traffic Highlands is expected to have in future years. We do not feel the best solution is the one that is currently proposed.

For over 100 years, people have accessed the Summit of Satulah Mountain via Satulah Rd and Worley Rd. Private purchase of land along these private roads have stopped access due to the problems car and people traffic have caused. This traffic affects their enjoyment and peace of their homes, blocks access on their roads and created potential security problems.

We do not understand why an existing problem should be moved into another neighborhood. Satulah Ridge will encounter the same problems Worley and Satulah roads have experienced. The most long range solution would be for these organizations to work to acquire a permanent dedicated access to provide for ample parking and a trail. For example, the side of Satulah Mountain on the Walhalla Road (NC 28) is much less populated than the Highlands town side of the mountain.

Fact:

Satulah Ridge lot owners are bound by a Declaration of Protective Covenants filed by Highlands South Properties, which is recorded in Book P-10 page 133, Macon County Registry of Deeds. These Restrictive Covenants pass with the sale of the home or

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• THANK YOU! •

Any time is a good time to pack a shoe box!



Dear Editor,

I'm writing to thank the residents of Highlands and Cashiers for their generosity in helping needy children worldwide this Christmas season. Together we were able to collect 857 in Highlands and 17,972 shoeboxes in Western North Carolina – which includes Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Macon, and Swain Counties—filled with toys, school supplies and hygiene items—for Operation Christmas Child, the world's largest Christmas project of its kind. We also want to share our US total of almost 8 million and World-wide total of over 10.4 million. For many children, these shoeboxes will be the first gifts they have ever received.

Although our local drop-off locations here in Western North Carolina are closed until November 2015, shoebox gifts can be packed any time. Operation Christmas Child is a project of the international Christian relief organization Samaritan's Purse, and gifts are received year-round at its North Carolina headquarters (801 Bamboo Road, Boone, North Carolina, 28607). People also still have plenty of time to get involved through the project's website, where they can pack a shoebox gift online.

To learn about year-round volunteer opportunities to serve with Operation Christmas Child, visit samaritanaspurse.org or contact me at wncocc@yahoo.com.

Thank you again to everyone who participated in this project. A simple gift, packed with love, can communicate hope and transform the lives of children worldwide.

**June C. Trull, WNC Area Coordinator
Operation Christmas Child**



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No more snow covered sidewalks



Photo by Jim Lewicki

Dear Editor,

Here is a HUGE shout out to the town for its new tractor which is cleaning all thesidewalks in town. It saves us hours and hours with shoveling!

**Richard Delany
President Old Edwards Hospitality Group**

...MAYOR continued from page 2

be good for a small resort town like Highlands with robust sales tax collections. The new formula would dramatically cutback the town's sales tax revenue. Compared to other nearby areas with declining sales tax, our collections increased about 15% in the last year, so using the current for-

mula more revenue should come into the town. With the per capita plan Highlands could see even more taxes going down the mountain to more populated areas.

When I communicated these concerns to Bob Frye, the town manager responsible for the budget, he too let me know

his concerns about this plan stewing in Raleigh. Bob is already looking a contingencies in a worse case situation. If the state adopts this per capita formula, Highlands could lose around \$750,000. The new budget could be pressed to fund substantial infrastructure improvements, or just the continuation of some services. We would have to decide what to cutback or where to

increase taxes and fees.

One might say Highlands could be caught in a trickle up and down revenue conundrum. Tax revenues would trickle up to big population areas and losses would trickle down to the local level where the hard decisions would have to be made. I will keep everyone posted as more information becomes available.

...NCACC continued from page 14

for federal and state lawmakers to not send unfunded mandates to local governments. We were successful on both levels,” he said. “Meeting with them personally, we were able to explain the process of getting ideas and goals from all 100 NC counties. Our collective voice is quite influential, much more so than a single county speaking to an issue. We had 11 issues that we in NC pushed this year and were successful in getting support from our lawmakers on all 11.

MC County Manager Derek Roland said preserving the county's Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) money and the need for some federal money for roads in Macon County were key issues for him.

He said it was important for the commissioners to lobby for these funds because as a public service organization, Macon County's number one priority is to serve the citizens of Macon County.

“Accounting for \$337,000 of revenue in our current budget,

PILT funding plays a key role in allowing us to provide these much needed services,” he said.

For instance: This amount would annually fund Macon Counties legal, human resources, and economic development departments; it would pay the annual salary of 10 Sheriffs Deputies; it would pay the annual salary of 10 EMT Paramedics; and it would annually fund Macon County's garage.

“As you can see from these examples, \$337,000 goes a long way in Macon County,” he said. “Without these funds our only options would be to reduce services or raise the current tax rate by approximately \$.03 (3/10 of 1 cent). Many urban counties with larger cities get federal money for mass transit such as the rail systems and bus systems. Since rural counties don't get this money we are working through Mark to get some money from the federal level for our local roads in Macon County.”

Roland said the importance of relationships is paramount and the trip to and attending confer-

ences such as the Legislative Conference in Washington, allowed Macon County to strengthen existing relationships and create new ones.

“It is nice to be able to pick up the phone and speak with our Congressman or Senator when a need arises locally. Both Thom Tillis and Mark Meadows extended this offer to us when we met personally met with them in Washington,” he said. “The more we network at conferences such as this one in Washington the more we are connected. The more connected we become, the more opportunities we have for collaboration and discussion. I feel this collaboration and discussion is key to efficient and effective government.”

Corbin said face-to-face meetings with NC senators and congressmen was extremely helpful.

“We discussed several issues specific to Macon County and got the attention of our lawmakers. One example, the USFS McCall cabin on Walden Way above Dry Falls was put there by federal

funds years ago but the work to make it a destination spot was not completed and it is not open. We discussed this with Mark and he made a call regarding this issue on the spot.

Corbin said those who think what happens in Washington and Raleigh does not affect Macon County are wrong.

“We must be involved with our lawmakers in Raleigh and Washington. In addition, by meeting with them personally on their turf, you accomplish two things beyond the issues discussed. You first let them know that it is important enough that you take the time and effort to come see them. Secondly, you build relationships with those you need to work with. It would be easy to think the only way they affect us is when they vote in session. Nothing could be further from the truth. If we have a relationship with these folks, there are many ways they can help us and our constituents with many issues that arise where the federal government has authority or influence.

— Kim Lewicki



...SATULAH continued from page 9

problem of overflow parking on the narrow road; problem of using the parking area and the woods as a toilet; parties at night in the parking area, especially teenagers; runoff from the watershed lot could form ponds during heavy rains; and residential zoning doesn't allow parking lots.

Shaffner said the Greenway

Board met the day after the public hearing and decided at this time to withdraw the offer to purchase the lots for the proposed Satulah Ridge trail to give the homeowners more time to form their association and talk about the project.

“We've written them a letter explaining our decision and we have sent Phil Whitaker, who previously agreed to sell a lot to

the Greenway, a cancellation for the contract on his property. Whitaker has received and signed it and is waiting for the Greenway to sign it.

Meanwhile, the sign-out list at the end of the hearing showed three homeowners opposed to the plan and 19 members of the public in favor of it.

“To date, only 20 of the 42 homeowners to whom we sent

letters have expressed an opinion about the project, and those opinions are split evenly,” said Shaffner.

He also said that some checks for the purchase of the two lots – as of yet, uncashed – have come from Worley Road property owners as well as those who don't live on Satulah at all.

“They all want the problem solved. The public appears to

approve unanimously, whereas some Satulah Ridge homeowners, who will be directly affected, have concerns about traffic, safety, and privacy, which the Greenway takes seriously,” he said.

If a trail to the top of Satulah is fated not to be, we'll regret it as a great loss to the public, but work on the current Greenway will continue.”

— Kim Lewicki

...TB continued from page 8

ond largest revenue source after property tax. Anything we lost there would have to be made up somewhere else or services cut. Neither one of those options is good,” he said.

MC Commission Vice Chair Jim Tate said his initial reaction is that he hopes it isn't true.

“It would be just another example of the redistribution of wealth to the metropolitan areas. This could potentially be devastating to our local governments,” he said.

MC Commissioner Ronnie Beale and president of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) said this is almost the same tax reform proposal that was put forward two years ago.

“It did not gain any traction at that time. The NCACC is monitoring all committee meeting concerning tax reform; as of now all looks OK, but as we have seen, this can change very quickly. Anytime those of us from rural counties hear talk of quota or population-based proposals of any kind

we are very concerned.”

He said he has met with Senator Bob Rucho who is pushing this type of tax reform and has expressed the county's concerns.

“We will be watching,” he said.

In Town Manager Frye's report he said the some town projects are behind schedule due to weather. The intake valve project on Lake Sequoyah has slipped behind by three weeks, but since it's an 18 month project it should be OK.

He said the field house at the ballfield is on schedule as is the floor and bleachers renovation at

the Rec Park.

The Town Board was visibly concerned when he announced that the prefabricated glass panels for the enclosed pool are behind schedule with a chance the pool won't open May 31.

However, according to Mayor Taylor who discussed the issue the following day, said Recreation Director Lester Norris said the prefabricated panels should arrive in May and will be erected soon after arrival.

“The problem is that it will take longer to install the mechanical heating and air systems. But there is still the possibility of in-

stalling the cover in May and keeping the pool open during the summer so swimming can take place.

“Toward the end of the season, sometime in August, the finishing of the mechanical system could resume,” he said. “This is just an idea that is being considered. Nevertheless, I wanted to clarify that according to my information the fabrication of the pool building is underway and the components should arrive sometime in May.”

It is a three to four week process to erect the structure.

— Kim Lewicki

• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

I must ... I must

By Curtis Fussell
First Presbyterian Church

A notable author named C. S. Lewis has written in his book, "The Four Loves" about a particular "love" called "affection." He describes affection as the good-will we practice between people in general. The good-will we express towards people we work with in the office or in a social setting. But Lewis is adamant that this kind of love, this affection, is more than a feeling. Lewis insists that affection simply cannot be based merely on the feeling that: "I like that person." Rather, genuine affection also demands decency, common sense, and reason.

Jesus once said "I must suffer, I must be rejected, and I must be killed." Jesus made this statement as a profound, deep, and demanding action he had to take to express the love of God. It was the kind of demanding love that is more than the expression of a "feeling." Instead, it expressed a demanding love that reaches out to benefit others.

One of Jesus' followers who sought to live out Jesus' demanding love died recently. His name was Coach Dean Smith. He was of course a celebrated basketball coach at UNC-Chapel Hill. Yet, Dean Smith's greatest accomplishments were off the court as a devoted follower of Jesus Christ.

However, Dean Smith was not devoted to the ways of Jesus in merely some pietistic fashion, "O, how I love Jesus; ask me how I know he lives, he lives within my heart." No. Dean Smith expressed the love of Jesus that says, "I must... I must..." as an expression of God's love that demands action for the benefit of others.

For example, early in his career, Dean Smith hired black athletes to play on his teams: one of the very first major collegiate coaches to integrate athletic teams. Dean Smith could have said, "I have a bad feeling that this action will cost me my job." But no, instead, Smith followed Jesus' demanding love. Dean Smith said, "I must place these men on our basketball team."

Another example early in his career was when Dean Smith walked into a "white only" restaurant in Durham, NC with two black friends who were pastors, during Jim Crow days. Smith ordered a meal with his black friends, and then they sat down to eat at one of the tables. Dean Smith could have said, "I have a feeling this could turn ugly. This could cost me more than the price of a hamburger, fries, and a drink." But instead, Dean Smith, as a follower of Jesus Christ, said "I must go, I must enter, I must eat here in this place with these men as a protest against racism."

Dean Smith made a huge impact on the people who played on his teams. All of them, as much as I have read, say they loved the man because of his generous regard for them and others.

Obviously Jesus's gracious but demanding love drove Smith to act in ways that expressed God's gracious and daring love. Dean Smith's actions still provide profound examples of God's love for others that is more than a feeling – it's a doing and an action that is tangible for the benefit of others.

Proverbs 3:5

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John 3:16

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

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Parish office (Father Francis): 526-2418
Mass: Sun: 11 a.m.; Sat. at 4p

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Rev. Marty Kilby
Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 11 a.m. & 7
Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

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Sun.: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 10:45 a.m.; Worship: 6 p.m.

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Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer
Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11
Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study: 7

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Sept 7- Oct 26- Informal Evening Eucharist: 5:30 p.m.

Thursday: Noon Healing Service with Eucharist.

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Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers
Sunday School: 10 am, Worship Service: 11 am

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

The Highlands Police log entries from Feb. 8 Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.

Feb. 8

• At noon, officers were called about someone selling a Rolex watch face to a jewelry shop owner which had been stolen.

Feb. 13

• At 8:40 a.m., officers responded to a report of a simple assault during a verbal dispute on Church Street.

Feb. 14

• At 11:38 a.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on Spring Street.

• At 9:30 p.m., Danielle Nicole Reese, 23, of Scaly Mountain, was arrested for DWI, a hit and run property damage, failure to report an accident and DWI.

• At 3:48 a.m., Stephen Nicholas Johnson, 28, of Highlands, was arrested for possession of a SCH II and SCH IV controlled substances and drug paraphernalia.

Feb. 16

• At 1:15 p.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on US 64 west.

Feb. 17

• At 12:20 p.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on US64 west.

• At 6:30 a.m., officers were called to Main Street Inn pertaining to a burglary with non-forced entry.

Feb. 20

• At 12:15 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident in Highlands Plaza.

Feb. 22

• At 9:30 a.m., officers were called about a burglary with forced entry at the Highlands Smokehouse where various tools, \$500, debit cards and cigarettes were missing.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries

from Feb. 1.

Feb. 1

• At 1:04 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on U.S. 64 west.

• At 9:31 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on S. 4th St.

Feb. 2

• At 6:56 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Turtle Pond Road.

Feb. 5

• At 4:55 p.m., the dept. responded to a chimney fire at a residence on Dog Mountain Road.

Feb. 8

• At 9:47 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Highlands View Road.

• At 10:13 a.m., the dept. stood by at the hospital for the MAMA helicopter.

• At 1:29 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Shortoff Road.

Feb. 12

• At 1:51 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid at a brush fire.

Feb. 14

• At 7:01 p.m., the dept. was called for mutual aid to the Scaly FD but the call was cancelled.

• At 7:31 p.m., the dept. provided assistance removing a tree that had fallen on US 64 west at Dry Falls.

Feb. 18

• At 5:36 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Panther Mountain.

• At 7:32 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Moorewood Circle. There as a structure fire and minimal damage occurred.

• At 3:30 p.m., the dept. responded to a Co alarm at a residence on Leonard Road.

• At 9:01 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Stonebridge Lane.

Feb. 19

• At 2:10 p.m., the dept. responded to a possible structure fire on 3R Lane but it was just smoke from steam.

• At 4:46 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Smallwood Ave.

Feb. 20

• At 10:08 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Cullasaja Club Drive. It was due to a water flow valve.

• At 3:06 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Sweetwater Circle.

Feb. 21

• At 6:46 p.m., the dept. provided assistance at a resident on Cowee Ridge.

Feb. 22

• At 2:30 a.m., the dept. was first responders to a residence on Chestnut Lane.

• At 11:51 a.m., the dept. responded to a vehicle accident on Turtle Pond Road.

• At 4:25 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at the Hospital.

• A little past midnight, the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Cullasaja Club Drive.

Feb. 23

• At 2:28 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire at a residence on BlueValley Road where a wood splitter was on fire.

• At 8:47 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid on a fire in a barn in scaly Mountain.

Feb. 24

• At 9:31 a.m., the dept. was first-responders at a residence on Foreman Road.

• At 12:451 p.m., the dept. responded to a vehicle accident on Buck Creek Road.

• At 10:13 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Wahoo Trail.

Feb. 25

• At 4:19 p.m., the dept. responded to a chimney fire at a residence on Blue Valley Road.

• At 5:01 p.m., the dept. responded to a vehicle accident at US 64 east and Buck Creek road.

Feb. 26

• At 1:20 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Old Walhalla Road.

Feb. 27

• At 4:20 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm on Main Street.

Feb. 28

• At 4:23 p.m., the dept. re-

sponded to a vehicle accident on Rhododendron Drive.

March 1

• At 12:28 p.m., the dept. walked a hiker out of the Glen falls area.

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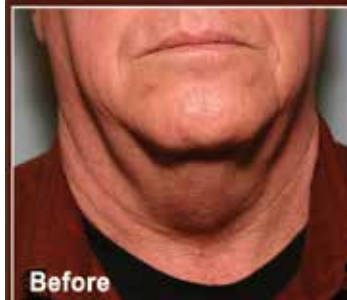
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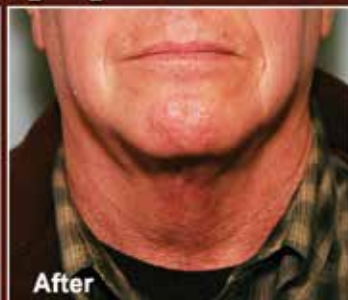
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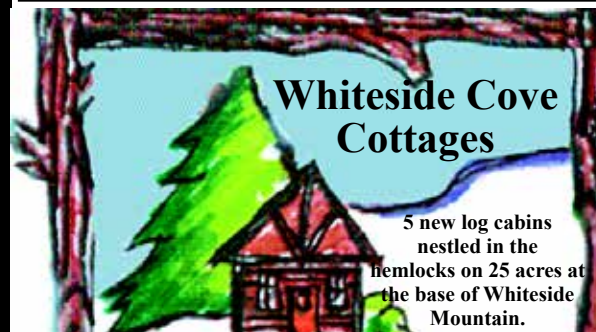
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...LAZARUS continued from page 1

drug overdose is preventable. It is a secular, non-profit organization that provides technical assistance to community groups and clinicians and attempts to empower communities and individuals to prevent drug overdoses and meet the needs of those living with chronic pain through data and compassion.

North Carolina has higher than average overdose death rates. According to the North Carolina Division of Public Health, more than 1,000 people die from drug overdoses in North Carolina. Nearly all of these deaths involve prescription opioid pain relievers (like methadone and oxycodone, fentanyl, morphine, tramadol or hydro-morphone, collectively called "other and synthetic narcotics."

Becky Barr, Information Officer at the Public Health Center said Macon County became involved in Project Lazarus recently when grant funding was offered by the organization to local communities.

"The Macon County Substance Abuse Task Force developed the action plan for the grant proposal and Macon County Public Health agreed to serve as the fiscal agent, since the Task Force itself is not incorporated or a 501c3," she said.

Some things proposed locally to implement the program are recruitment and advocacy for "Managing Chronic Pain" Training. This training was held in Macon County on November 19, 2013. The audience invited included prescribers including specialists, primary care physicians, emergency room doctors, hospitals, midlevel providers, dentists, pharmacists, nurses, case managers, nursing home and family care home administrators, behavioral health and other healthcare providers treating

patients experiencing acute or chronic pain. The training was hosted by MAHEC and Community Care of NC.

The program content included the nature of chronic pain and the role of opioids in its management; Adequate assessment and risk stratification: Indications and contraindications for safe opioid use; Informed consent, treatment agreements and establishing realistic goals for an opioid trial; Time efficient monitoring to maintain safety and effectiveness; Adapting treatment, intervening when needed, and when and how to stop prescribing opioids.

Project Lazarus partnered with Macon County Public Health, the Macon County Child Fatality Task Force, Macon County Sheriff's Department Substance Abuse Task Force and the P.E.A.C.E. Foundation to host "The Bedroom Project" in September 2014. This was a free (for participants) interactive presentation using a "travelling bedroom" to teach parents where children might be hiding prescription drugs.

The grant purchased a medication disposal container which is located at the Franklin Police Department. It also provided partial funding for the Youth Risk Behavior Survey in Macon County. This survey was offered to all 6th-12th graders in Macon County. The survey contained questions about drug use.

A community forum will be hosted in April, 2015. This forum will provide education materials and information about the safe storage and disposal of medications and encouraging people to take their medication correctly and never share prescription medications. It will also promote Operation Medicine Drop in Franklin and Highlands.

The grant will sponsor a youth advocacy training conducted by Y.E.S. (Youth Empowered Solutions) sometime in May or June of 2015. All of the activities have been completed with the exception of the last two items and ultimately funded by Project Lazarus.

Each county in North Carolina was allowed to apply for a variety of funding activities. Macon County applied for a variety of activities that focused on primary prevention. The activities selected would address both legal and illegal use. Some of these activities provided training for health care professionals, some provided parent and youth education and some focused on preventing misuse of prescription drugs by promoting adequate disposal.

Grant funding was offered to all 100 counties in North Carolina including Macon County. There are no associated costs to the public.

• BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NEWS •

Cashiers home-schoolers learn about bears



Photo by Cynthia Strain

On Feb. 6, Cynthia Strain with the B.E.A.R. Taskforce and Steve Day presented a children's program about bears at the Cashiers Rec Center for 20 home-schooled children.

Through a power point program and Day's acting, the children were taught the wrong and right ways to react if they see bears in the woods. The kids got the message loud and clear, and just in case they forgot anything, they were sent home with brochures, puzzles and games about bears.

Highlands-Cashiers Hospital Receives New Beds



Highlands-Cashiers Hospital has received a generous contribution to purchase five state-of-the-art beds that improve the care for patients at the local hospital. The gift was made possible by the Tarver Family Foundation Charitable Trust.

The new beds are Hill-Rom Accumax Quantum beds with continuous care for safe skin. One feature includes built-in scales so that if a patient is unable to get out of bed, staff can still assess their weight and provide appropriate medical care. In addition, the new beds provide uninterrupted pressure redistribution which helps prevent any breakdown of a patient's skin.

"These new beds are a great addition to Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. They will provide greater comfort and improved care to our patients," stated Kathy Crist, RN, Director of Patient Care Services. "Highlands-Cashiers Hospital staff greatly appreciates the generosity of the Tarver Family Foundation Charitable Trust which provided this funding," added Crist.

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MOUNTAIN FRESH GROCERY is accepting applications for full-time positions as a coffee/ barista server. Contact Don at 828-526-2400.

MANAGER & SALES ASSOCIATES NEEDED FOR BARDO, a retail furniture and home accessory store. Full and part time positions in our Cashiers & Highlands locations are available. Send resume Bardo49nc@gmail.com (828) 482-2410. (st. 2/12)

WOLFGANG'S RESTAURANT now hiring experienced waitstaff and line cook. Please call Jacque at 828.526.3807 (st. 2/29)

FULL TIME GRILL AND PIZZA POSITIONS available at Mountain Fresh Grocery. Please apply in person or email jobs828@gmail.com

LOCAL CHURCH SEEKS FINANCIAL MANAGER/BOOKKEEPER - Community Bible Church is hiring a full-time financial manager and bookkeeper. Interested parties can submit resumes to CBCFinanceResumes@gmail.com Job responsibilities will include accounts payable and receivable, budget tracking, payroll, financial reports, banking, insurance management, and asset tracking. Full and working knowledge of QuickBooks and Excel is required. Awareness of specific accounting and reporting requirements for churches is a plus. Salary determined by level of experience. (st. 2/15)

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HOME FOR RENT: Three Bedroom home, 3 miles from town. Beautiful terrace and yard, pond and mountain views. Available seasonally or year round. Call 828-421-4681 (st. 2/29)

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LOTS/LAND FOR SALE

LAND FOR SALE IN CLEAR CREEK: 2.18 acre parcel has road frontage on Mack Wilson Rd. \$17,000. Any reasonable offers will be considered. Call 828-526-2874. (st. 10/23)

FOR SALE BY OWNER - 3 building lots in the gated community of Rustic Falls. Macon County tax records value at \$51,000 each. Must sell due to health reasons. Asking \$15,000 each. Call owner at 803-640-6004. (St. 5/1)

ITEMS FOR SALE

110/220 GENEREC EMERGENCY GENERATOR WITH AUTOMATIC SWITCH. Will require Lic. Electrician to remove. Leaving property. Take advantage of this fantastic offer. \$750 or best offer. Call 828-526-0502. (st. 1/29)

BRASS KING SIZE BED WITH NEW MATTRESS. \$200. 828-526-0502. (ST. 1/29)

FUR COAT - Mink with Fox Collar. Like new - \$2300. 828 526-4818 (st. 12/25)

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WORMY CHESTNUT FOR SALE: Approximately 300 square feet of 3/4" wormy chestnut wainscot milled and finished. Board length 36"; width varies from 4" to 8". \$2800 lot price. 404-944-5298 (st. 3/20)

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...LETTERS continued from page 15

lot. These Covenants which were filed on July 24, 1975, are still in effect. Paragraph 1 of these Covenants limits the use of lots to residential purposes only. We are all zoned R-1. The proposed use by the Greenway falls outside of the permitted use and violates our protective Covenants. In other words, the sale of lots 53 and 54 for any purpose other than single family homes is not right.

We are personally perplexed as to why the Greenway people have been working on this plan for two years and we have only been given six weeks' notice. Attending a meeting in Highlands when most of the homes have been winterized and closed up causes us additional expense and travel. This meeting should have been scheduled for the summer months when most residents are there.

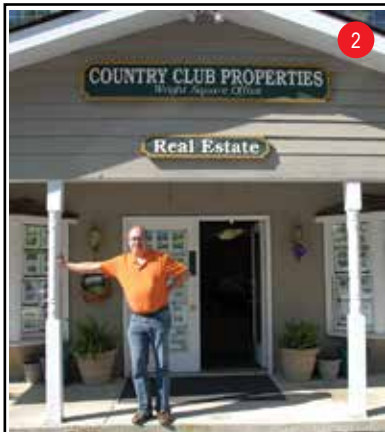
Our Restrictive Covenants are in force to protect our lifestyle, our home, our investment, and our right to privacy and any future infringements or violations.

We hope the Greenway and Land Trust find a long term solution that will not impact the daily life of all Satulah Ridge, Lucas Lane, Lynn Lane and Red Bird property owners.

**Kenneth and Kathryn Dohn
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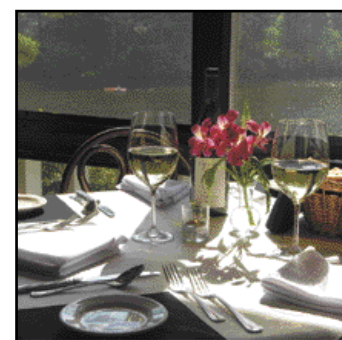
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