Volume 15, Number 51

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Thursday, Dec. 20, 2018

Classifieds...... 20

More trees cause uproar at TB meeting

At the December Town another proposal. Board meeting, citizens turned out to hear the final word on the proposed tree planters on Main Street but what they got was yet

This began a litany of comments and insinuations claiming the board wasn't being transparent. "As a business owner on Main

Street, this process has been the most nontransparent program I have seen," said Bob Kieltyka coowner of The Christmas Tree. "I

THIS ISSUE • • INSIDE Shopping Pullout...... 12-13 Mayor on Duty..... Letter Word Matter...... 15 Weather..... Spiritually Speaking...... 18 Ink Penn.....

•See UPROAR page 8

Town needs LGC OK for \$4.6M loan for fiber highway

With the passing of its resolution approving an Installment Financing Contract at the Dec. 13 Town Board meeting, the town has taken the first step toward making a broadband highway through the town limits on its 2.700 poles a reality.

To entice broadband companies and to set up a "smart-city" grid, the town plans on shouldering the expense of constructing the fiber network with a \$4.6 million loan from BB&T.

A commercial contractor will build the aerial network for the town. Wide Open Networks, who will potentially run the operation, will provide the capital to build the underground portion.

"They are consulting with their investors about what they will contribute and the potential

•See LOAN page 6

Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays!



Where the secular and religious meet...Highlands.

Photo by Jim Lewicki

A Great Christmas Present

By Lee Lyons Highlands Writers Group

Obituary.....

couple of years ago I asked Andrew, my neph-Lew, "What do you want for Christmas?"

Andrew was twenty-one, fresh out of Erskine college on his first job as a youth minister. He joked, "World peace and money." Then he asked me the same ques-

I went on a tirade of wanting nothing. "Please, no more bedroom shoes, candles, candies, soaps and perfume. I've got enough pepper jelly to paint the walls green. God plays the biggest trick on us. We spend all our lives acquiring stuff and then we get to the point when we want to give it away and no one wants it." I had just tried to give Andrew a load of

"God doesn't do that," Andrew said. "People do that. You sure there is not one little thing on your list?"

Well, that got me thinking and I came up with one. It was a present I had asked of my son before he was killed in a car accident. "Andrew, are you registered to vote?"

I could tell by the length of time it took him to answer that he was not. He came up with what he thought was a good reason. "I don't feel I'm informed enough about the issues to vote."

At least he didn't say he was avoiding jury duty, an excuse I've heard over the years. I told him, "You made it through college. I think you could get more informed if you wanted to. After all, vou said vou wanted world peace. If you really want to give me a present, I'd like to see your voter's registration."

I went on another tirade about all the men and women in the armed forces who get killed or injured trying to give people in other countries the right to vote. They keep us safe while we celebrate Christmas at home and vet some Americans can't get off their butts to vote. I laid it on pretty thick.

I was surprised Andrew hadn't registered to vote because he is a responsible young man. To his credit, he didn't argue or make excuses. He said he would pray

•See PRESENT page 14

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ATEAU'S POSIT

About the Main Street discussion

ast Thursday's Town Board meeting had two contentious items, the broadband public hearing and Main Street tree planting plan. Let me provide my perspective.

As the presiding officer of the meeting I take responsibility for not managing this agenda item better. The plan that the Land Use Committee developed in conjunction with NCDOT and Highlands Chamber representatives was included in the agenda packet for consideration by the full board. Procedurally, I should had made it clear that the plan in the packet was the one put forth by the committee and should be considered first. The proposal to add three additional trees that Commissioner Pierson brought forth for review was developed after the first plan was developed.

The images of the plan and the additional trees were presented in a continuous sequence, giving the impression that the first plan was no longer under consideration. Given the confusion, I believe tabling the proposal was the best course of action. The Land Use committee and Chamber representatives will meet before the January Town Board Meeting to review the issue and again make recommendations.

During the ensuing discussion, some

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Highlands Mayor Patrick Taylor

people implied that the board had a hidden agenda to scuttle the plan recommended by the Land Use Committee. That is simply not the

Commissioner Pierson proposed an alternative after realizing the large separations between the trees on the first plan. He wanted to provide a visual to show the difference of adding three trees would have before a plan was voted on.

Some may question why the mayor allowed him to present this idea. My response is that commissioners, as elected public officials, can introduce an idea or topic for discussion at any Highlands Town Board Meeting. As it should be, I do not have the authority to limit what the board members want to discuss.

I listened carefully to the statements made during this review. One merchant stated he worries the additional trees will hide his business sign intended to attract customers. Another statement was made that "money doesn't grow on trees." My response was that it's not necessarily the case. Trees and money may go hand in hand. There is ample consumer research confirming business districts with green tree canopies, in fact, attract more customers. Kathleen Wolf of the University of Washington has written extensively on urban trees and consumer behavior. A business district with aesthetic architecture and street landscape motivate customers to park their cars, walk and stay in a business district.

In 2003 Virginia Postrel wrote her groundbreaking book, The Substance of Style. The book's thesis is that we are now living in an aesthetic economy as much as a mass marketing, convenience economy. Communities like Highlands that embrace the aesthetic economy attract visitors. In contrast, the mass marketing, convenience economy centers around large illuminated and flashing signs that form business strip zones containing fast food and chain stores, all of which boldly display larger than life national logos.

Instead, Highlands has opted for an aesthetic, distinctively green Main Street with limited signage. I believe that is the concept supporting the proposed additional trees. The question is how many? The issue will be reviewed again at the January meeting.

Sorry, I have to stop writing, I'm over the 500-word limit. I will write about the broadband hearing next week.

Merry Christmas!



Respect history please

Dear Editor,

In reference to the the article in the Dec. 6 edition, "Street name Paul Walden Rd to remain," do the people who want to change the name of Paul Walden road know anything about the person so named?

As a teenager I knew and loved Paul and Sarah Walden. I was a freshman in high school (late 1950s) ad played basketball. Beloved teacher Prof Newton also was coach and drove the ball bus to away games.

Paul and Sarah Walden were our chaperones, every time that old, cold ball bus

• See LETTER page 6



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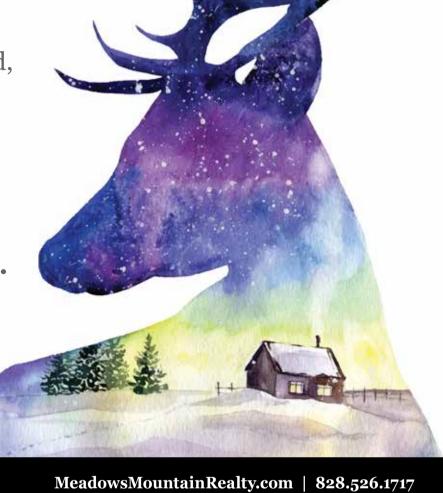
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HIGHLANDS CC An open floorpla and quality features, including gleaming oa flooring, native stone fireplace, tall windows and vaulted ceiling lined with timber, add a dramatione to the living area. The orientation of th home ensures natural light is maximized and offers the flexibility of additional living spaces. On bedroom guest apartment over the garage, docl and beautiful gardens with fire pit.

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Hudson Library in Highlands will be showing free holiday movies all day Saturday, December 22.

Drop in any time the library is open, 10 AM to 4 PM, to take in some Christmas cheer. Our movies, ranging from favorite classics to new releases, will appeal to all ages, so you can drop off your kids or grandkids while you take care of that last-minute holiday shopping, or relax and watch a movie yourself.

For more information or to request an accommodation, please call the library at 828-526-3031. Hudson Library, 554 Main Street in Highlands, is open 10am-5:30pm Tuesday through Friday and 10am-4:pm on Saturday.

...LOAN continued from page 1

return over a 10-year lease period which NC law prescribes. The town is not the only entity exposed to risks," said Mayor Pat Taylor. "So, even if the LGC [Local Government Commission] approves the loan, this may not move forward."

The plan is for Wide Open Networks to lease the fiber highway from the town and to run the operation which will involve enticing broadband companies to drop lines from the poles directly to residences.

Before the \$4.6 million loan can be finalized, the LGC must give the OK. It goes over the town's finances and decides if it can handle the long-term investment.

According to the audit presented Thursday night, the town with almost \$4 million in its undesignated fund balance and the money it makes from its enterprise funds – specifically its electric fund – it is likely the LGC will give the OK.

The resolution being sent to the LGC says no tax increase will be imposed to fund the fiber highway. The com-

• See LOAN page 10

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...LETTER continued from page 2

cranked guess who was with us young people? Before each game they always gave each of us a Hershey candy bar. That was a big deal to us.

Reason was it would give us energy to win. We always did very well. There are numerous good things that two people did for the community. Please try to know the history for the recognition!

Yes, he was a great Santa even though the traveling wasn't easy. Paul alwys showed up in his red suit and bag of goodies. Road name is well deserved.

Agnes Gibson Crowe Highlands



•The Ink Penn•

Christmas Music

Tmust admit that when Sirius XM added their Christmas stations in early November, I began listening to them nonstop. Their Traditional Holiday and Hallmark Music stations play mostly the songs I recall from my childhood, while the Holiday Pop station has a bit more rock n' roll, songs that are slightly less appealing to me. My addiction applies only to music, so you won't find me glued to the Hallmark TV Channel watching Christmas movies.

What are your favorite Christmas songs? I have a basket filled with Holiday CDs I play over and over, but some of the songs I cherish from my childhood aren't represented. Possibly my all-time favorite album was a Perry Como album—the one we played on our red Victrola.

We lived in New York City when I was in grammar school, and I took that album to PS 162 for show and tell. Yes, in NYC, the schools are numbered, not named. I walked to school in those days, so I must have been a sight carrying a 33 rpm album.

The song I played for my class was C-H-R-I-S-T-M-A-S. Perry Como sings the meaning of Christmas by explaining what each letter stands for, beginning with "C is for the Christ child." I've never heard that song anywhere else and was thrilled years ago when I stumbled across a cassette tape version of the album. Remember those?

I have multiple versions of the classics like "Silver Bells," "White Christmas,"



Kathy Manos Penn

"Santa Claus is Coming to Town," "Jingle Bells," and "The Little Drummer Boy" sung by artists from Nat King Cole to Kenny Loggins. One year, I picked up a cassette of country Christmas songs and discovered "Hard Candy Christmas" and "Pretty Paper."

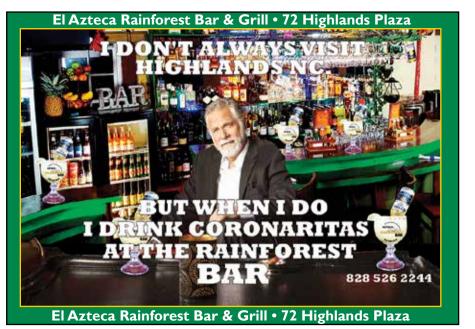
Not all additions to my collection have been keepers. Jimmy Buffet's and Neil Diamond's Christmas CDs just didn't do it for me, but "When My Heart Finds Christmas" by Harry Con-

nick, Jr. is special for its versions of "O Holy Night" and "Ave Maria."

Other favorites from the 80's and later, are those by Mannheim Steamroller and George Winston, the tunes that my youngest sister disses as "those songs you play with no words." Also in my collection of music "with no words" are my several Windham Hill Christmas CDs, a recording label I stumbled across in the 90's when I visited B&Bs to facilitate leadership training classes.

There was always a stack of Windham Hill CDs in the conference room, CDs filled with peaceful instrumental music. I found them the perfect accompaniment to preparing my class presentations and enjoying my morning coffee before the participants arrived. When I discovered Windham Hill had Christmas CDs, my collection grew. My favorites from that collection are "A Winter's Solstice," and "The Carols of Christmas."

• See INK PENN page 11



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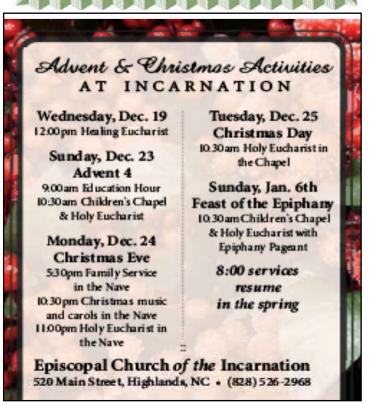
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...UPROAR continued from page 1

understand this came on suddenly because of the state paving plan, but the issues that came forth regarding the plantings has struck a chord with this community. The meetings on the subject were very well attended by people who spoke on both sides of the issue: an agreement was made, renditions shown and now at this meeting at

the 11th hour a new proposal that no one has seen until tonight when everyone thought this was a settled issue regarding two plantings on each block. I've always found this commission over the years to be extremely transparent in its dealings, but this particular proposal has been nontransparent. This is not the way the town normally

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conducts its business."

A final design for "greening up Main Street" was proposed at a special meeting Monday, Nov. 26 involving the Land Use Committee made up of Commissioners Donnie Calloway, John Dotson and Eric Pierson: Chamber of Commerce representatives President Bob Kieltyka, Jerry Moore and Amanda Sullivan; NCDOT engineer Andy Russell, Highlands Town Manager Josh Ward and Public Service Director Lamar

If NCDOT granted the town the 5-ft encroachment rather than the required 8 feet between the tree planter and the travel-way, then the group agreed to two trees on two blocks - 3rd to 4th and 4th to 5th with flush grates for drainage and iron tree guards around the lower trunk of the tree.

Russell thought he could get the 5-ft. encroachment OK'd, which he did.

Consequently, citizens came to the December meeting expecting the town to vote on that de-

> However, Commissioner

> > • See UPROAR page 16





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•OBITUARY•

Clyde E. Gibson

Clyde E. Gibson, 83, passed away on December 10, 2018 in Hobe Sound, FT

Clyde was born in Highlands, NC to Tom and Savilla Gibson and was one of 12 children. Clyde honorably served our country in the United States Navy, and in the '60s moved to a place he called "Paradise," Hobe Sound, FL where he met the love of his life of 51 years.

Clyde was in the landscaping business for many years in Hobe
Sound, but his lifetime hobby and passion
was golfing. He was an accomplished golfer
winning 20 titles playing in the competitive
Palm Beach County Golf Association and
was inducted in the PBCGA Hall of Fame.
Clyde also won the Senior Classic PGA National Championship course 4 times and



was a Sr. Amateur golfer on the Treasure Coast.

Survivors include his wife, Linda Marr Gibson, two daughters, Karen Gibson Jeneff (Martin) of Marietta, GA, and Tracy Gibson Cowart (Shane) of Okeechobee, FL; two grandchildren, Curtis Cooper and Brittany Hamby and three great grandchildren, Nova, Cole and McKinley; and one sister, Agnes Gibson Crowe of Highlands, NC.

Clyde's visitation at Aycock Funeral Home in

South Stuart was December 12, 2018. A private graveside service followed at Fernhill Memorial Gardens in Stuart.

In lieu of flowers, donations are appreciated to Treasure Coast Hospice, 1201 SE Indian Street, Stuart, FL, 34997 or at http://treasurehealth.org.





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236858

...LOAN continued from page 6

missioners made this clear at the meeting even though some citizens doubted their word. The resolution reads: "... does not anticipate a future property tax increase to pay installment payments."

Citizens also questioned the legality of the town competing with private enterprise. Though the NC General Assembly has seesawed back and forth on the issue — now a public/private partnership is allowed. By law (HB129), NC government entities are essentially prohibited from launching new ISP service directly to residents — that window has now closed — but they can partner with a private entity, which is what Highlands is doing with Wide Open Networks.

The town's Altitude Broadband was launched when the window allowing public entities to launch services to its residents was open. It is grandfathered in.

In addition, people at Thurs-

• See LOAN page 11



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...LOAN continued from page 10

day's meeting asked how the town could do this considering the bottom-line.

Commissioner Amy Patterson explained that the town sees this as needed infrastructure, like a utility, and it doesn't need to make a profit ... it needs to offer the service.

Experts say the fundamental reason for public enterprise is it can undertake unprofitable investment where there are community benefits – what economists call positive externalities – that make the investment economically and socially desirable.

The town's plan is to use its fiber highway as a "smart grid" – not for broadband. The grid will enable administrators to enhance the quality and performance of services such as energy and utilities to hopefully reduce resource consumption, wastage and overall costs.

Meanwhile, the need for fast, reliable broadband is stronger than ever. People want to live in country settings and work remotely – connecting themselves to urban centers on which they rely for their livelihood but where they no longer want to live. This, according to Mayor Taylor falls under the category of Economic Development, which he considers important for the town's future.

...INK PENN continued from page 7

George Winston and other Windham Hill artists keep me company in my office on my small single CD player. The dog, the cat, and I have been known to listen to the same CD for hours and the same few CDs for days. Once our stereo receiver bit the dust, the cable Christmas channel provided holiday tunes in the living room, but I'd much prefer to load my CDS and hit shuffle as I used to do.

That's why my thoughtful husband gave me an early Christmas present of a portable five-CD player. Visions of sugar plums and non-stop Christmas music are dancing in my head, and when I "undeck" the halls and pack away the decorations, I plan to listen to all my favorites one last time. For me, "It's the most wonderful time of the year."

Kathy is a Georgia resident. Find her books "The Ink Penn: Celebrating the Magic in the Everyday" and "Lord Banjo the Royal Pooch" at Books Unlimited in Franklin and on Amazon. "Lord Banjo the Royal Pooch" is also available at Highlands Mountain Paws. Contact her at ink-penn119@gmail.com, and follow her on Facebook, www.facebook.com/KathyManosPennAuthor/.

In Highlands there is Altitude Broadband, Northland Cable, Frontier and Highlands Cable Group. So, what's lacking?

According to Nin Bond, owner of Highlands Cable Group, what's lacking is that not all of the town's 2,700 poles can hold all of the companies because many of the poles are too short. The 40 inches required between each providers' line as outlined by the National Electric Safety Code can't be achieved.

Numerous poles have been replaced with longer poles, but not all of them. This is a long, tedious and expensive process. Consequently, Bond said he can't grow his system.

According to Commissioner Patterson, part of the \$4.6 million being sought will be used to change out all the poles within the town limits that are still too short. The fiber highway will be attached to those poles which will enable private companies to offer service to residents who will be free to choose the company with which they want to do business.

Furthermore, companies can use the town's fiber highway as a jumping off place to extend outside the town limits which is where connectivity is sorely needed.

Zen Spa

Wimter

SPECIAI

The private company, Wide Open Networks, is leasing the town-owned fiber for its backbone "highway" and will be in charge of running that operation. The town considers this a win-win. Providers will no longer have to pay to build the infrastructure – as they are doing now – but will reap the benefits of servicing residents.

Bond said he will still be relying on his own "highway" so the town's fiber highway and the Wide Open Networks affiliation won't change anything for him.

He said he has hundreds of customers and scores of others just waiting for his lines to become available. This will be possible once the short poles are switched out and the providers on the poles who are out of compliance are forced to move their lines to accommodate others.

After years of trying to get providers out of compliance to move their lines, the town has amended its Pole Attachment Ordinance to include a strict timeline to comply and if companies don't, they are charged \$100 a day. Furthermore, the town has hired a contractor to work directly with those providers and is expediting the process.

The town now awaits word from the LGC and from Wide Open Networks.

- Kim Lewicki



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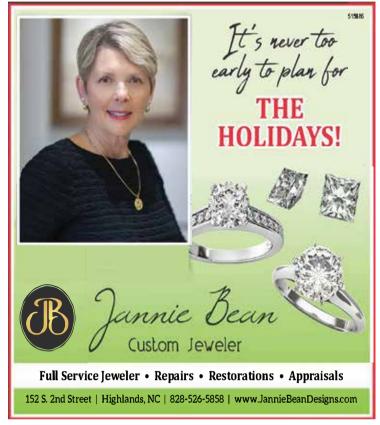
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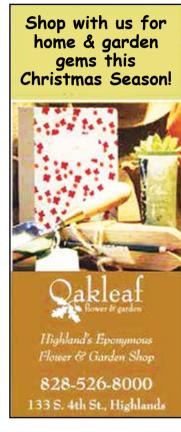


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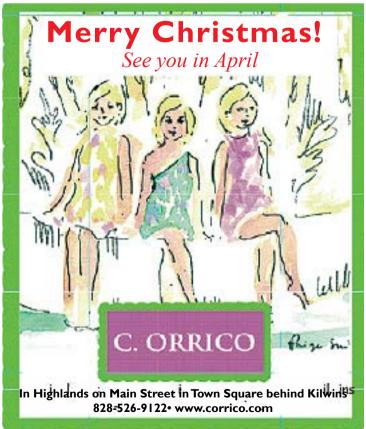












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...PRESENT continued from page 1

about it. Did I say he's a youth minister?

I forgot about our conversation, but on Christmas Day, I received an e-mail from Andrew with a copy of his voter's registration. Now that was a great gift! I loved it.

Does this story get your mind going of the real gifts you'd like to receive or give? I admit this is a question that appeals to older people like me who have a different perspective on the holidays. I wish I'd felt like this years ago when my parents were alive. Mama always left the new outfit I gave her in the box on her closet floor. However, she asked me many times to go with her to the Better Breathers exercise class. I can imagine how thrilled she would have been if I'd shown up with cookies for the wonderful people who kept her going with emphysema. Instead, I wanted her to have new clothes and a package under the tree. I didn't listen to her.

I told several of my friends about Andrew's wonderful surprise gift. Turns out, they had wishes like mine. A few Highlanders shared their wishes.

Bob Boschell said he'd like his grandson to read The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle or they could choose a New York Times best seller that they would both read and discuss.

Ann Forshee said she wishes her two children would write or record three good

memories they have growing up.

Virginia Talbott said, "I'd like my children to let me teach them to play bridge so we could play together."

Greg Parrott said he'd like for me to finish writing the words to a song he's com-

Ann Brissey said, "I'd love for my children or grandchildren or great grandchildren to help me around the house. There are two lightbulbs high in the ceiling that need to be replaced. My gutters need to be cleaned. I can dance down Main Street in the Christmas parade in the pouring rain, but I can't climb up a ladder."

Others said walk or run in a five K race, volunteer for a charity in their honor, write a poem or a love letter, cut off all electronic devices during the holidays, use their Christmas money to pay off a credit card.

Of course, it is the thought that counts and any gift is appreciated when given with love, even red pepper jelly. But if you really don't need or want more "stuff", be specific about what you'd like. You can't just hint. And make it doable. Then, your family and friends have to do what Andrew did. They have to listen, pray about it, and do it.

I hope we all get something we really

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• WORD MATTER •

A Tale of Two Christmases

Typically around this time of year, the spirit of the season permeates everything. For the faithful, it's the celebration of a special young man's birth. For others it's either something else or perhaps it's just another stretch of time in winter. For me, it's a reminder of two moments; one from my childhood and another from 12 years ago.



Bud Katz

I grew up in Brooklyn, NY. At that time, Brooklyn was a kind of stew containing people from many different ethnic backgrounds and belief systems. In the mid-1950s, My pre-teen friends and I didn't reflect on whether something occurred BC or AD. Our idea of before and after references were BE and AE ... before Elvis and after Elvis. His arrival on the scene was the cultural marker for our generation. The Christmas I'm recalling occurred one year after Elvis.

Late December, for New York City children, meant time off from school, maybe snow and, were we fortunate, presents.

Not every year, but this one and a couple of others, my mother would serve as our good shepherd. She would, at my urging, take a flock of 12-year-old ruffians to Radio City Music Hall. We would watch whatever black and white film was playing, typically It's a Wonderful Life or the original Miracle on 34th Street, and then we'd bear witness to the spectacle of the living Nativity. This was the New York version complete with a real, live infant, real goats and sheep, and one disturbingly real, and quite malodorous camel. The animals came compliments of the Central Park Zoo.

After the show, we'd stand, freezing, and watch crazy people on ice skates go round in circles on the Rockefeller Center rink. Then, we'd lumber up Sixth Avenue to the Carnegie Deli for a late lunch or early dinner. After all that, we'd head back to Brooklyn via subway, well fed, exhausted, and ready for a good night's sleep.

I don't recall what I did yesterday, but that memory is still, 60 years on, indelibly imprinted upon my memory.

Fast-forward to Highlands, NC on the day after Thanksgiving 2006. That would be nearly 50 years after Elvis and that childhood trip to Radio City Music Hall.

Four days during the summer and

early fall of 2004 changed our thinking in terms of where we'd settle when time came to retire. We'd envisioned a condo on an idyllic beach, on a barrier island off the west coast of Florida. However, four unwelcome visitors – hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jean – changed all of that. Our new strategy could be summed up in two words:

higher ground.

Following a whirlwind weekend based in Asheville in early July 2006 we focused our attention on a small, friendly, vibrant town in western North Carolina. Later that year, after feeding turkey, my world famous stuffing, and way too much more food to family and friends, we drove all the way up on November 24th, looked at property on the 25th, and decided to spend that Saturday evening, walking along Main Street in Highlands.

It was cool and clear. Christmas decorations were visible in store windows and on light posts all along Main Street. It was busy, festive even, as dusk turned to dark. Everyone was there to watch the lighting of the town's "official" Christmas tree, the big one alongside the Methodist Church. Cheerful volunteers were out in force serving cookies, cocoa and coffee up and down Main Street. It was sweet.

We ran into friends from what we then referred to as "back home." They also were scouting the plateau for property. Several other folks we met that night would become neighbors and friends, following our permanent, full-time relocation in March 2011.

Then, the festivities got underway.

There were carolers caroling in front of the Church. When someone finally threw a switch the huge spruce lit up, well, just like a Christmas tree! People applauded and cheered. The carolers broke into Joy to the World. We looked at each other, smiled, nodded and knew. Barring anything we could possibly imagine at the time, we'd discovered our future home.

Our minds are funny. They hold onto some events, some people, some periods of time, while allowing other, less meaningful, less important matters to slip away ... to evaporate, like morning mist.

Those two Christmas events, the one with the cookies and the one with the camel, are there for the duration.

Merry Christmas, everyone.

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...UPROAR continued from page 8

Eric Pierson said he had gotten numerous calls from people asking for more trees – perhaps four on the 3rd to 4th street block and three on the 4th to 5th street block.

"I have had some businesses and citi-

zens say it would look better aesthetically to add a couple more trees if we can," said Pierson. "It's been a busy last few days. [Winter Storm Diego.] I didn't intend for this to be a last second thing, this is just



This is an artist's rendition from the town's webcam of how the 3rd-4th street block would look with the four trees, shown here in green.

another concept we are putting out there; people have called saying two trees on each block looked rather straggly down big expansive Main Street. So, I was trying to get another proposed design out there so people could see it."

A mock-up of the street with additional trees was shown Thursday night.

"People don't want this. This is confusing. You have always listened and heard us if it's a good idea or a bad idea and this time it's different. There was an agreement," said Harry Bears of Southern Way.

Mayor Pat Taylor took offense to suggestions that the town hasn't been transparent.

"To say that we have not been including people is really a disservice because we have had open meetings, so we aren't trying to cover anything up. The new plan has popped up and that is what Commissioner Pierson is showing here. There is no underground anything going on," he said.

Chamber board member and owner of Kilwin's Jerry Moore, like others, kept coming back to the point that a decision had been made Nov. 26.

"We found a reasonable compromise

from the people who said 'do nothing' to the other groups who wanted a lot of trees on Main Street. I'm a little disappointed because I wasn't even going to come tonight because I thought we had a pretty good agreement. I don't want the trees to block my view so I am disappointed about the idea of more trees. We had a good agreement," he said. "I would encourage the commission to vote on what was agreed upon which is two trees or put the new plan in the newspaper and we will go through this whole process again."

Commissioner Brian Stiehler has not been in favor of adding trees on Main Street from the beginning and said considering how hot the asphalt gets it's an extreme environment for a tree to grow in anyway.

"Upcoming paving isn't enough of a reason for me to do this right now. Table it or shoot it down," he said.

Commissioner Donnie Calloway, who was absent at the meeting, saw the new rendition beforehand. According to Ward, Calloway said he is for the two trees, but anything different needs to go back into

• See UPROAR page 17

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...UPROAR continued from page 16

full committee for discussion.

Dotson, who like everyone else was seeing the new rendition of seven trees down the two blocks for the first time had a different reaction.

"The visual effect of the additional trees down Main Street is more appealing to me. In looking at this, the difference between two and four visually is great. The consequences are all positive. We're still not losing any parking. Trees down the sidewalks are more a pain to me than the ones down the middle of the street. So visually, this is far superior to the two-tree plan," he said. "It's a beautification aspect that we can use to enhance the Main Street of Highlands making it a welcoming, shady environment."

Mayor Taylor said studies show that a green canopy and green space is good for a business district because people want to stop and walk around.

Business owners present were mostly worried about trees blocking their store fronts and signs.

"Putting more trees on Main Street, which is a commerce street that generates the tax revenue for this town creates visual obstacles. We know what shops are where, but if you come in here as a tourist you are

• See UPROAR page 22

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Love and Forgiveness Forgiving the Unforgivable and Loving the Unlovable

By Fr. Casmir Maduakor

Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church

elson Mandela, former President of South Africa. was one of the most influential personalities in modern history. So was Mother Theresa. They both loved the unlovable and forgave the unforgivable. This was what Iesus Christ taught us about God (that God loves everyone – all the time – regardless of what we may have done or not done). God doesn't just love us for what we have done right: His love is beyond that. On the cross Jesus showed us what it means to love the unlovable and forgive the unforgivable. Mandela used this principle, and it worked both in the political and spiritual lives of South Africans; it restored peace. It also saved them from an evil cycle of revenge, which could have led to all out civil war. Through the power of forgiveness, Mandela achieved the peaceful resolution of conflicts between the whites and blacks in South Africa. Through the power of forgiving the unforgivable and loving the unlovable, whites and blacks in South Africa who have been enemies for years now live together in one country.

We should not forget that Mandela was in prison for, not 27 hours, not 27 days, not 27 weeks, not 27 months, but 27 years. Please take a moment for this to sink in. For 27 years, Mandela was imprisoned because he was black. When released, he forgave ALL who contributed to his imprisonment; this is powerful. Mandela is one model of history. Without his forgiveness, South Africa would be caught in the continuous cycle of revenge and war.

Mandela's story reminds us of Joseph and his brothers in the book of Genesis. Because of Joseph's dream, his jealous brothers hated him, beat him, removed his clothes and mixed them with animal blood, sold him, and then lied to their father Jacob that he has been killed by a wild animal. Can you imagine?

Years later, through the power of forgiveness, Joseph told his shocked brothers, "Fear not, for am I in the place of God. As for you, you meant evil against me; God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear I will provide for you and your little ones." (Gen. 50: 19-21)

In amazement at the power of Mandela's forgiveness, the world honored him with the Nobel Prize for Peace. Mandela's action is hope to all of us. He used Jesus' principle in the modern world and succeeded. Unconditional forgiveness is the way to resolve conflicts peacefully. It was valid then and valid today.

We should turn to Jesus' principle to resolve conflicts today, and Christians should lead the way.

Matthew 5: 23-24, "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift."

"To err is human, to forgive is divine." After Jesus taught his disciples the Prayer "Our Father" he added in Mt. 6:14-15, "For if you forgave men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses."

Remember, forgiveness unlike reconciliation requires only one person. You.

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Pastor Randy Lucas 526-3376

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SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Donald G. Bates • 526-3212 Sun.: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 10:45 a.m.; Worship: 6 p.m.

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Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer

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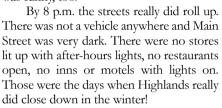
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Winters of old in Highlands vs. winters of today ... they are worth a visit

remember it well. When I was a child and my par-Lents and I would go out of town shopping for the day in the dead of winter, my dad had a funny little trick he would do as we drove back into town. He would say, "Watch this!" as he swerved off the main thoroughfare onto the center parking area and drove all the way down Main Street without hitting, or even seeing, a car! I'm not sure where the police were. Maybe they were napping or maybe they thought it was funny too.



Today it is a different story. Milder winters and the advent of SUVs that can travel in all types of weather have made Highlands accessible year-round. It's an easy weekend drive from Atlanta, South Carolina, and other places within a few hours travel. It's not so dark on Main Street anymore and some stores have lights in their windows to advertise their wares. You can usually find a few cars in the downtown area, even late at night. More restaurants and lodging places are open. And yes, there are things going on to attract people here, even in the winter.

Though the temperatures are definitely down, the "off season" has some advantages you won't find during the season. The rates at motels and inns go down, the crowds disappear, and rumor has it that some sellers of real estate are more negotiable on their prices as they look at the cost of holding their property through the long winter months. Realtors have more time to spend with clients and there's less competition for that great listing you found online and want to make an offer on.

Plus there are things to do here while you're not looking at property. The Highlands Food and Wine Festival over Veteran's Day weekend has become very popular, often being sold out months before the event happens. The traffic in town during



Betty Holt Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Meadows Mountain Realty

Thanksgiving week resembles the 4th of July. Stores having "end of the season" sales appeal to people wanting to avoid the city crowds. Some come here specifically to do their Christmas shopping in a more relaxed setting. The tree lighting on Pine Street Thanksgiving weekend kicks off the holiday season with caroling and cookies.

There's something special about spending the holidays in a natural, woodsy environment in the mountains. It just feels more like Christmas. Who can

resist the charm of a small town Christmas parade the first Saturday in December? The Highlands Players do a wonderful Christmas reading in mid-December and the Christmas Chorale, an inter-faith group, makes a joyful noise as they gift their community with song. Ringing in the New Year at one of the area's fine restaurants has become a tradition many end their holidays with.

After Christmas vou might encounter some snow and spend time at one of the area's ski resorts. While we don't get the amount of snow we used to (I recall many days of school lost in the winter), as long as it's 28 degrees, the resorts can manufacture snow. Highlands now has its own skating rink in the winter at Pine Street park. Old Edwards Inn offers spa packages to escape the winter doldrums and there's always winter hiking on less crowded trails. Gone are the ants and yellow jackets trying to help you eat your picnic in the woods. The Bascom art center offers classes, exhibits and the chance to purchase artwork year-round. The Hudson Library and the Book Worm offer ings entice you to curl up with a good book next to a roaring fire. Buck's coffee shop on Main Street can take the chill off with hot chocolate or a warm latte.

For some of us, it's time to wind down a little, and do some of the things we've put off during the season. It's time to visit with our friends and neighbors and catch up on our rest. For me, personally, I like to walk out my road and envelop myself in the winter quiet. It's time to take stock of the many blessings we derive from living in a small, friendly town. Maybe you'll come see for yourself.

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• See CLASSIFIEDS page 21







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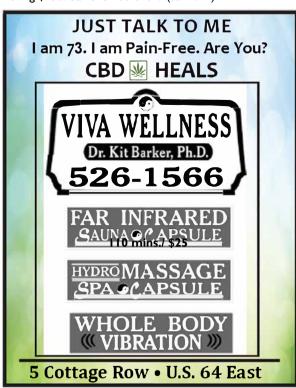
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...UPROAR continued from page 16

overwhelmed and if you see more things in your way, you're not going to see a shop that you might otherwise see with more trees either blocking the front or the signs that say what they do," said Moore. "I am not saying it's not pretty. I totally agree with you, but we live in a National Forest, if you want to see trees there are plenty of opportunities to see trees. We are an economic engine in WCU and we are looking at a street that works. But we came up with a compromise and I don't see why we are rehashing this and making more work than we need."

Kieltyka suggested tabling the issue for another month so there is time to get the new rendition published so everyone can weigh in.

"Perhaps the new rendition will be acceptable to everyone. I'm not passing judgement on it. It's a beautiful plan and anything we can do to beautify the town is fine. But make the options open to the public and let residents, business owners and other stakeholders have an opportunity to speak to the matter again next month," he said.

MIS/GIS Director, Matt Shuler who used to be the town arborist suggested planting tall trees – 75 feet London Plane trees – so the line of sight is clear under the limbs so people can still see business store fronts and signs across the street while getting shade and greenery.

Based on the state of the trees on the sidewalks and in Town Square, business owners say they don't believe the town will keep the new trees properly trimmed so despite what is promised, the trees growth will not be checked and will block signs and storefronts.

Thomas Craig owner of The Ugly Dog Public House on South 4th Street who has been for more trees all along said he's in favor of the new proposed plan, too.

"This looks fine. But if you decide not to do this, the businesses on South 4th will take that

money. You can improve our sidewalks, put our power lines under the street, take away parking and add trees. I'll take it. If it's not welcome on this street. I promise you the businesses on South 4th Street would be happy for it," he said.

Ran Shaffner who used to own the Cyrano's Book Shop on Main Street, said yes, it's about economics but people come to Highlands for the beauty of it.

"We might talk about the money we make, but they come here for the beauty," he said. "Part of that is the natural environment even on Main Street. People say it gets hotter up here each year, and that's because of the asphalt. Let the beauty lead and let the economics follow."

Mayor Taylor said the Land Use Committee and the Chamber will meet again before the January 17 Town Board meeting; the time and date to be announced.

- Kim Lewicki

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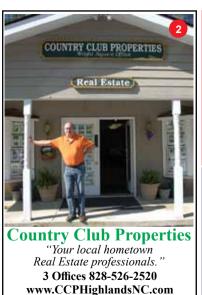
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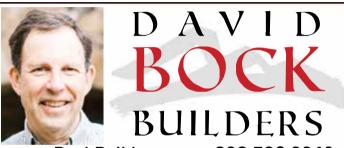
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