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FREE

Highlands' Newspaper

Volume 3, Number 3**Locally Owned & Operated****Friday, Jan. 21, 2005**

On-going

- The Instant Theatre Company's free Improvisation classes for adults has been re-scheduled to meet every Wednesday evening (weather permitting) February through May at 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. in the ITC's Studio on Main at 310 Oak Square. Auditions for musicians and singers are held between 7:30 and 8 p.m. also on Wednesdays. Please call the ITC office (828) 526-1687 to register for the free Improvisation class, or to schedule a music audition.

Jan. 20

- PTO meeting in the Highlands School cafeteria at 7 p.m. Dr. Rodney Shotwell and School Board vice-chair Donnie Edwards will be there for a special presentation.

Jan. 22

- At the Bascom-Louise Gallery, an exhibit entitled, "The Art League of Macon County," featuring work from the Art League of Highlands and the Macon County Art Association.

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a strenuous 8.5 mile hike to Standing Indian Mountain via the Lower Ridge Trail, returning via the Appalachian and Kimsey Creek trails. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin (opposite Burger King) at 8:30 a.m. Call leader Al Bruce, 369-2024, for reservations and more information.

Jan. 29

- Substance Abuse Forum "Let's Talk About It" at Tartan Hall in the First Presbyterian Church in Franklin at 6:30 p.m. Learn about the court's role in cracking down on drug use in Macon County.

- Voluntary Simplicity - First session 10-11:30 a.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Franklin at 85 Sierra Drive. Learn how your life may be enriched through the practice of knowing how much is enough. How much do we really need? Call 706-746-998.

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 5-mile hike on the Ridge Trail in the Coweeta Hydrolab area. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin (opposite Burger King) at 10 a.m. Bring a drink, lunch; wear clothing appropriate to the weather and sturdy, comfortable shoes. Hikes are limited to 20 people; reservations are required. Call leader Gail Lehman, 524-5298, for reservations, or more information.

- Friends of the Library Sale & Open House at East Franklin Shopping Center 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Old Edwards Inn & Spa plans for 2005

By Kim Lewicki

Now that most of the Old Edwards Inn & Spa exterior work is completed, interior work will begin but with much less impact on the Highlands community - officials promise.

By August of 2005, all OEI

building and renovating projects will be finished, said General Manager Mario Gomes.

"This year, everything will be better managed. We have set parameters and outlined who is responsible for what," said Gomes. He expects things will stay on

schedule and he hopes disturbances to the Highlands community and businesses in the immediate area of the OEI complex will be minimal this year.

Site preparation is in the works for the biggest project for 2005 - Spa

■ See OEI page 8

Crowe named 'Fireman of the Year'



Assistant Fire Chief Ryan Gearhart presented John Crowe with the "Outstanding Fireman of the Year 2004" award at the annual Highlands Fire & Rescue Awards Dinner, Saturday, Jan. 15 at the Highlands Conference Center. For the complete story and more photos, see page 6.

Photo by Jim Lewicki

Committee to get down to business

By Kim Lewicki

Unlike the 1989 Land Use Plan, it's likely the 2005 version will include a section devoted to Highlands' residential neighborhoods.

The reason? With Highlands growing and commercial and residential districts coinciding, planners think it's time to initiate certain guidelines - mainly to define and encourage aes-

thetic and environmentally conscious neighborhoods.

At the Jan. 17 land use committee meeting, members finished defining the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with Highlands residential neighborhoods. Now with its "homework" finally

■ See COMMITTEE page 17

Free health care a possibility in Highlands

By Kim Lewicki

It's in the very preliminary stages, but a local group is working toward developing a free health clinic in Highlands -- dubbed the Community Care Clinic.

With the number of uninsured, working-poor residents growing, a need for free primary health care has been identified, said officials.

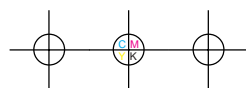
"We are in the midst of getting statistics to verify need and we're talking to area doctors," said group member Ginger Slaughter. "So far the response has been very positive."

The vision of the Community Care Clinic is clear - that everyone deserves to have basic health care. Its mission - to provide free health care services to the medically underserved who live or work in the Highlands-Cashiers area.

The idea was spearheaded by Dr. Mark Heffington who established a Mobile Health Clinic for migrant workers in the Cashiers area a couple of years ago. The mobile unit, equipped with basic medical supplies a nurse and a doctor, visits migrant worker camps and farms regularly.

Members of the Community Care Clinic committee include Jim Graham Highlands-Cashier Hospital Administrator, Dr. Mark Heffington, Kathy McGaha with Healthy Carolin-

■ See HEALTH page 9



\$1,000 REWARD

for information leading to the capture & conviction of the two men who stole a life-sized, carved bear from outside TWIGS, Thursday, Jan. 13, around 5:30 p.m. They drove a dark green, small Subaru-like stationwagon with a luggage rack on top.

Call Highlands Police

at

526-9431, 526-4131

or dispatch at 369-3369.

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• OBITUARY •

Steve Potts

Steve Potts, 51 of Highlands, died at a hospital in Honduras, Central America early Wednesday morning.

Family members said his health had been failing but he was in good spirits during his extended visit to the country. He was taken to the hospital by ambulance Tuesday night. The suspected cause of death was liver failure.

Family members planned to fly to Honduras Thursday to claim the body and return Potts to the states. Funeral arrangements are pending.

Potts is survived by his mother Mae, brothers Terry and Robbie, sister Sherrie, all of Highlands.

• FORUM •

How I learned to deal with rejection, rejuvenation and revival in one week

Those waves of devastation, which occurred halfway around the world from my little corner here, somehow prepared me for the first few days of 2005. It was only two days into my 27th year, Friday morning Jan. 7, when the first wave struck — fired from a job that demanded my best and to which I'd given my heart and soul for eight very long months.

In the Jan. 13 issue of The Highlander, an article said I accepted a position at the competition paper, which made it sound like I chose to leave The Highlander.

To me the statements, "Clean out your desk," and "You need to leave the building; give me your key and tape recorder," are words of termination. Words that meant I was no longer employed and had no choice but to pursue other employment.

Not to worry. My efforts over the last eight months have not gone unnoticed and fortunately I was able to sail into calmer seas that same day, with the promise of employment from Highlands' Newspaper.

Just as that wave leveled out, the next one struck. It was 6:24 a.m., just last Thursday when devastating news arrived via telephone. An unknown doctor from the East Georgia Regional Medical Center's Emergency Room, in my hometown of Statesboro, Ga., told me my father was in the midst of an aneurysm or "triple A" (I later learned that meant abdominal aortic aneurysm). He was given a 10 percent chance to survive.

A heavy fog in the area prevented any air travel to the Savannah Memorial Medical Center, a delay that would cause more of a threat to his life.

Not knowing the outcome of his treacherous journey, my boyfriend, Ian, and I traveled the six hours to Savannah. With no words of hope after three hours, my mother told me to call the hospital and ask for my father, Paul Brown. When I did they told me he was in the cardiovascular intensive care



Erin Brown

unit. Just knowing he was alive gave me the energy I needed for the last leg of the trip and the initial shock of seeing my father.

Walking down the labyrinthine halls of MMC, I noticed the temperature drop as I neared the CVICU, shaking the blood back into my

hands I reached for the phone that hung silently at the entrance to a set of opaque sliding doors. I lifted the receiver and an operator promptly answered, "CVICU."

"This is Erin Brown. I'm here to see my father, Paul Brown," I could barely get the words out. "One moment, I'll open the doors," she said.

The mechanical sound of the doors filled my ears, as I gasped to regain control of my breathing, which had become somewhat labored. I calmed myself and made the final steps of my journey.

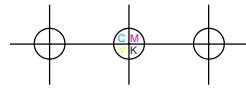
At first sight, he looked comfortable, resting on the sterile sheets stamped with the MMC logo; numerous tubes ran like jumper cables into his neck and face. Swollen from surgery, with a sallow complexion, it took a moment to realize that this nearly lifeless person was my dad. Words like "critical," and "ventilator" washed over me as I struggled to regain some control of my now unrecognizable life and prepared myself for the "long wait."

The five-day interim has taken the emotional toll of that tsunami that destroyed so many lives, so far away the day after Christmas.

I do not take lightly the impact on the lives of those people; it is only a source of comparison to tell you as an only child the effects of fear that one would never be able to have those cherished last words between a beloved father and daughter.

Even now that I have had a few days to become accustomed to the constancy of the ventilator, it is still difficult to talk to him. Sometimes I expect him to rise and laugh with me about one thing or another. Talking

■See FORUM page 3



Bear thieves hit 'Twigs'

By Kim Lewicki

It was about 5:30 p.m. Thursday, and customers were still milling around inside Twigs on U.S. 64 east.

A browser, about to become a customer, realized she'd left her purse in her car. She went outside to get it and noticed two white men in their mid-20s loading a carved wooden bear into the back of a small, dark green station-wagon with a luggage rack on top.

She quickly returned to the store and asked if someone had just bought one of the "outside" bears. The proprietors ran outside in time to see the car speeding away toward Cashiers.

Moments later, Highlands Police Officer Tim Cook, who happened to be traveling toward Highlands on U.S. 64 east, rounded the bend near Twigs and came upon a large, carved bear in the middle of the road.

The stolen bear had fallen out of the car as the thieves made their speedy get-away.

"This was a very brazen act," said Twigs proprietor Mal Phillips. "To

steal something like that from a store in broad daylight while customers are coming and going," Phillips said he hates to see this sort of thing happening in Highlands.

The bear was sold – awaiting pick up by the buyer. But the fall from the car chipped, cracked and scraped the statue so owners will have to give the buyer another bear.

No one got a license plate number but one man was described as slender with shaggy brown hair wearing a dark green vest; the other, 5 feet 8 inches tall with a medium-build.

There's some talk of carved bears – lifted from the yards of Highlands' residents as well as from storefronts – ending up in flea markets in Atlanta. But officials haven't been able to substantiate the story.

Meanwhile, the owners of Twigs are offering a \$1,000 reward

for information leading to the capture and conviction of the thieves.

Anyone with information is urged to call the Highlands Police station at 526-9431, 526-4131 or dispatch at 369-3369.



The carved bear was sold – awaiting pick up by its new owners, when thieves grabbed it from outside Twigs and sped away in

• LETTER TO THE EDITOR •

What is the rush to privatize Social Security?

Dear Editor

Although the year 2042 seems a long way off, we do need to address the matter so that we can avoid benefit reduction or a hefty tax increase in the future.

In 1983 Congress passed legislation that would create a surplus in the Social Security Trust Fund to help pay for boomers. By 2018 the funds being held will balloon to \$3.7 trillion. Treasury bonds owned by the Trust Fund are assets and there should be no question about repaying the loans. John Rother AARP's director of policy states, "Reducing the trust funds is a sacred commitment."

•See LETTER page 18

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... FORUM continued from page 2

the first time was the hardest – standing beside my father with the dim fluorescent lights above me, my mother, like a worried bee in my ear, "talk to him," "you're doing great," she said her voice trying hard not to break.

The words I wanted to say couldn't quite jump over the painful lump at the base of my throat. I managed to croak out that I was there and was taking care of everything. A beep from his blood pressure monitor was the only response. The talking has gotten easier, but I'm still not sure whether he hears me or not. I just try to let him know that I'm there.

Sitting, waiting and watching him in ICU gives me time to reflect on the changing of our roles, as I must face the responsibility for his care in the coming months. He has been such an influence on my life and with all his quirks and idiosyncrasies, he's still my dad, and today, he's still alive, although barely.

Which brings me to the most important part of this column. If you are

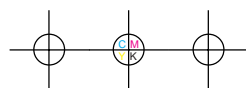
a male, with a family history of aneurysm, then today, without fail, call your doctor for a cat scan and be certain you have no signs of any, anywhere.

My father's surgeon informed me after surgery on Thursday, that elective surgery for an aneurysm, rather than emergency, is the method of choice. It at least gives the patient a fighting chance, which my father barely had with the enormous loss of blood he experienced.

My only hope is that knowing what I know now will at least give me the opportunity to be a spokesperson to prevent this for anyone else.

Now that the second wave is somewhat subsiding, I can only reflect on the well wishes from all my family and Highlands friends, who not only were there for the first wave, but also have been there for this wave and all the many waves to come.

Each day is bringing better medical reports for my father, and it gives me hope that my return to Highlands is imminent.



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■ See WOOLDRIDGE page 7

• MOVIE PIX •

The Village

The 2004 mystery/thriller, starring Bryce Dallas Howard, Sigourney Weaver, William Hurt and Joaquin Phoenix, directed by M. Night Shyamalan, with an extremely good and spooky sound track by James Newton Howard. Rated PG13 for a bit of violence and scary scenes.



Stuart Armor

and Those We Do Not Speak Of by staying out of the forest and occasionally throwing them gifts of meat. But the need being great, and her love being strong, young Ivy will not be deterred, and she starts out, alone, blind, fearful yet resolute.

The rest, if you have not seen it, you'll have to

find out for yourself. For those that have, keep your mouth shut.

For anyone seeking a blood spattered hack-um-up film, this is one you should give a pass to. For those looking for a genuine suspense film, reminiscent of Twilight

Zone or Outer Limits, this is a good pick.

Director Shyamalan, well known for edgy stories with surprising endings (see Sixth Sense, Unbreakable, and Signs),

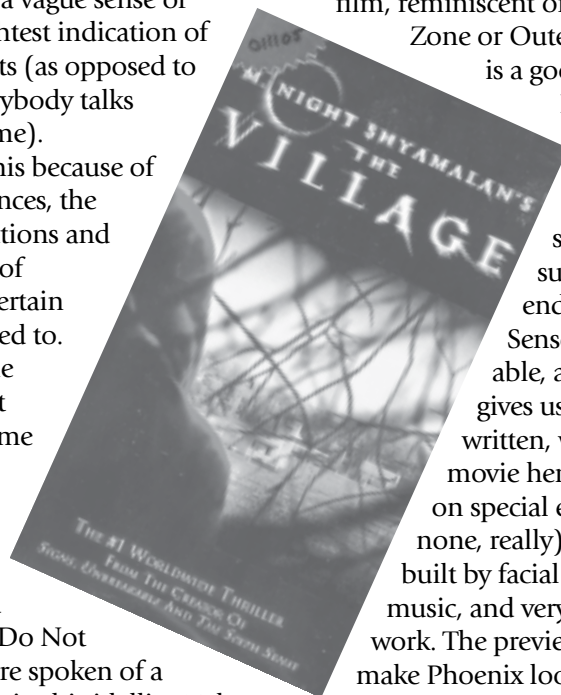
gives us a good, well written, well acted movie here. Not much on special effects (almost none, really), the tension is built by facial expressions, music, and very good camera work. The previews sort of make Phoenix look like the lead role, but the central character is definitely Howard (who is Ron Howard's daughter).

The supporting cast works to enhance her story, and they do it well. William Hurt, playing Ivy's compassionate and strong father, does a fine job, can also be seen in Jane Eyre and One True Thing. Sigourney Weaver, who can play any role with ease, has done films as varied as Snow White (brilliant and terrifying), Heartbreakers, Company Man, and of course the Alien series, does her usual great job here. Phoenix, usually playing more creepy roles than this, also appears in Gladiator, Clay Pigeons, and most recently, Brother Bear.

The Storyline: In the Village, everything is the best of all possible circumstances in the best of all possible worlds. Mostly. In addition to regular work, kids playing games, young (and old, too) people falling in love, there is a vague sense of unease, the slightest indication of unspoken secrets (as opposed to secrets that everybody talks about all the time).

We know this because of the nervous glances, the halted conversations and a general sense of tension when certain topics are referred to. Oh, and also the scary music that comes up anytime the Things We Do Not Speak Of are spoken about or referred to. And The Things We Do Not Speak Of sure are spoken of a lot around here, in this idyllic, 18th century-looking village, far from its neighboring towns, surrounded by the dark forest, that they do not cross.

Now, I don't want to give anything away here, but given the set up, you have already figured out that something is going to have to happen to make somebody try to cross the forest. And soon enough, it does, when young Ivy Walker (wonderfully portrayed by Bryce Dallas Howard, a newcomer to the screen) asks for permission to go to the next village to obtain some medicine for her tragically injured young beau. Ivy is the bright, beautiful, and blind daughter of one of the village elders and her request disturbs many of her neighbors, who have long worked to maintain a peace between the village



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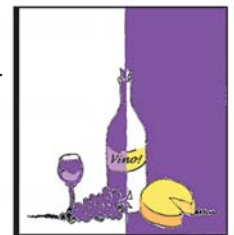
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Sun: (1), (4), 7

Mon - Thur: 7

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Fri: (4:10), 7:05, 9:10

Sat: (2:05), (4:10), 7:05, 9:10

Sun: (2:05), (4:10), 7:05

Mon - Thur: (4:10), 7:05

ELEKTRA rated PG-13

Fri: 7:10

Sat: (2), 7:10

Sun: (2), 7:10

Mon - Thur: 7:10

WHITE NOISE rated PG-13

Fri: (4), 9

Sat: (4), 9

Sun - Thur (4)

MEET THE FOCKERS rated PG-13

Fri: (4:15), 7, 9:15

Sat: (2), (4:15), 7, 9:15

Sun: (2), (4:15), 7

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Highlands Fire & Rescue officers for 2005 are front from left: Terry Watson, Jimmy Petrone, Carl Zoellner, Ryan Gearhart, James Manley. Back row from left: Jody Zachary, Jimmy Tate, Wayne Henry, and Lenny Metrick.

Photos by Jim Lewicki

Fire & Rescue Dept. recognizes its own

The Highlands Fire & Rescue Department's annual awards dinner is a time for members of the community and department to commend and recognize the men who live their lives "on call" for others.

At Saturday night's ceremony, held at the Highlands Conference Center, Fire Chief James Manley named John Crowe "Outstanding Fireman of the Year 2004."

He also introduced officers for 2005 - Chief James Manley, Asst. Chief Ryan Gearhart, Captain Wayne Henry, 1st Lt. Jody Zachary, 2nd Lt. Jimmy Tate, Rescue Capt. Carl Zoellner, Rescue Lt. Jimmy Petrone, Treasurer Terry Watson, and Secretary Lenny Metrick. Allan "Ricky"

Bryson and Eric Pierson received certificates of appreciation - to Bryson for nine years service as Asst. Chief and to Pierson for serving as Rescue. Lt.

Drill Attendance Certificates for perfect attendance were presented to Lenny Metrick and Roger Lee Wilson.

John Crowe, Jimmy Petrone and Matthew Wilson were acknowledged for only missing only meeting.

Wayne Henry Ryan Gearhart, Bob Zoellner and Carl Zoellner were acknowledged for only missing two meetings. Fire house meetings are held every Tuesday at 7 p.m.

Several men were presented service pins and certificates for years of

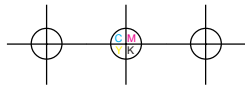
■See FIRE & RESCUE page 7



Asst. Fire Chief Ryan Gearhart, presented Fire Chief James Manley with a certificate and pin for 25 years of service.



Jerry Tilson who retired after 22 years of service, was presented a plaque and watch by Chief Manley..



... FIRE & RESCUE continued from page 6

service: Philip Gates for five years; Robbie Forrester for 10 years; Jeff Munger for 10 years; Wayne Henry for 15 years; Roger Lee Wilson for 15 years; and James Manley for 25 years.

Jerry Tilson retired after 22 years of service. In his 22 years with the department, Tilson served as Rescue Lt., Rescue Captain, EMT, and in

1989 was named "Outstanding Fireman of the Year." Assistant Fire Chief Ryan Gearhart presented him with a plaque and watch.

Macon County Emergency Services Director Warren Cabe for receiving this year's "Citizen of the Year" award from the county.

The Chef & His Wife restaurant from Franklin catered the affair.

Highlands Fire & Rescue Administrative Assistant Bobby Houston was pleasantly surprised when Chief Manley acknowledged his 41 years of service with the department.



Drill Attendance Certificates for perfect attendance were presented to Lenny Metrick and Roger Lee Wilson.



Chief Manley presented past Asst. Fire Chief Allan Bryson with a certificate of appreciation for serving as Asst. Chief for several years.

... WOOLDRIDGE continued from page 4

your health." As it turns out Billy Bob was wiser than Thornhill and he sold his corporation, all his fish hatcheries and his corporate stocks.

At his retirement party, a co-worker asked Billy what he would do with his time now that he was a successful millionaire. Billy Bob leaned forward to speak into the

microphone. "I'm going to a little place called Highlands. I'll catch trout for dinner, then take a nap. I will whittle mountain hawks from solid blocks of oak and play the banjo with my friends in the afternoon. After dinner, I will make love to my wife and go to sleep."

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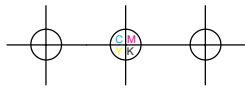
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An afternoon visit



Members of The Girls' Clubhouse visited the residents at the Fidelia-Eckerd Living Center on Friday, Jan. 14. Paula, one of the residents, sang "Always" to Stephanie Puchacz and in return, the girls sang several songs to her.

Photo by Kim Lewicki

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Chris Cutshaw

• BUSINESS NEWS •

'Miss Priss' comes to Highlands

The signature Lilly Pulitzer store on the second floor of Acorns in Highlands is now called "Miss Priss" effective immediately and will function as its own entity from this point forward.

"Our sister store in Charlotte, is expanding to include a location at Lake Norman in early 2005," said Anita Cleveland, store manager. "Since both of those locations are Miss Priss stores, it was natural to include this location for consistency and cohesiveness."

The three stores operate under a general umbrella and are thus able to

cross-market and merchandise with the signature Lilly Pulitzer brand. The stores will also be able to share special appearances and events like trunk shows, as well as offer a more exclusive inventory across the board. "It also allows us a great deal of uniformity," said Cleveland.

Miss Priss and Acorn's will now be referred to as the Shops at Old Edwards Inn.

Acorns and Miss Priss are open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Stores are located at 465 Main Street in Highlands.

... OEI continued from page 1

Phase II – the building-out of the spa on the old Highland Hiker/McCulley's site on Church Street.

The 15,400 sq. ft. addition will include a solarium, a spa café, more therapy rooms, a steam/sauna, ladies and men's locker rooms, and two more spa suites for a total of six in the complex.

Gomes said construction on the site will not mimic last year's right-of-way encroachment horror story because a crane that sits on a 13-ft. by 13-ft. pad will be used to transport building materials and subsequent debris.

The bakery idea in the old gem shop has been nixed for an administrative office building. "The profit margin just wasn't there," said Gomes. The exterior will basically stay the same. The interior has been gutted; interior renovations begin this week and plans for completion and move-in hover around July 1.

A structural engineering study is currently in the works to make sure the second floor of the Christmas Tree building can handle a 60-person meeting room. The exterior of the The Christmas Tree and the Pescado's portion of the building will include a face-lift but little else.

The theater-room has been nixed in lieu of a fitness center which will be housed in the nook behind The Christmas Tree building. "It just made more sense to have a fitness center for a destination spa than a theater," said Gomes. "People are fitness conscious."

A lot of changes will be taking

place in phases on the Kelsey-Hutchinson Lodge campus but Gomes said because of its location it is removed from the hustle and bustle of Fourth Street.

Five of the cottages have been gutted and will be renovated and refurbished with a completion date set for May 15.

The main lodge is getting a complete facelift. "When it is finished it will be reminiscent of the old Lee's Inn," said Gomes. "It will be retrofitted for a 1890s-look with wrap-around porches." It too, is set to be completed by May 15.

Eric Schmitt's Carolina Builders won the contract on the Kelsey-Hutchinson re-do. "We are trying to keep business local and use local people," said Gomes.

Meanwhile, the Old Edwards Inn & Spa is in business. Its vacation rental business on the Church Street alley and Spring Street is going strong — patrons booked the quarters throughout the Christmas season.

Vacationers are also enjoying the Inn & Spa on Fourth Street where walk-in traffic continues to delight proprietors. "Walk-in traffic at the Inn is just not something we factored in," said Director of Marketing Cynthia Gomes. "We're obviously extremely happy about it."

Patrons at Madison's can now enjoy a complete cocktail service including wine and beer and the Rib Shack now serves beer, too. "It's nice that brown-bagging isn't the only option anymore," said Gomes.

Community turns out for blood drive



AnMED officials said they were very pleased with the good response during their "off season" blood drive at Highlands School, Thursday, Jan. 13. Sixty-seven people donated 57 units of blood.

Photo by Stephanie McCall

Third drug forum set for Jan. 29

The county's third "Let's Talk About It" substance abuse forum is set for 6:30 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 29 at Tartan Hall in Franklin.

The community forum, sponsored by Healthy Carolinians, the Substance Abuse Task Force and the Macon County Sheriff's Dept., is the third of its kind in just over a year.

"It's important that we take these issues to the public," said Sheriff Holland. "We need everyone's help to crack down on drug abuse in Macon County."

During the first forum, held at Macon Middle School, parents and community members expressed outrage at the court system. Sheriff Robby Holland promised a forum with members of the court system present so questions and concerns could be addressed.

At the Jan. 29 meeting District Attorney Michael Bonfoey, Superior

Court Judge James U. Downs, Supervisor of Probation & Parole Officers for the 30th District's Debra Debruhl, Macon County Sheriff Robby Holland and Mental Health Professional Mike Neidig will be present.

The panel represents various aspects in the solution to substance abuse in Macon County said to be "one of the toughest issues of our time."

In addition to discussions on drug use in Macon County, answers to these questions will be answered: What is the law? Is it too tough? Not tough enough? Why does it take so long to try a criminal case? What are the penalties? How does probation work? What are the treatment options? How can I protect my children?

Tartan Hall is located in the First Presbyterian Church, on Church Street in Franklin. For more information, call Kathy McGaha at 349-2426.

... HEALTH continued from page 1

ians of Macon County, Dr. Don Mullen of Highlands First Presbyterian Church, Maria Thompson and Ginger Slaughter.

Preliminary plans suggest the clinic be housed on the campus of the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital where doctors are readily available.

"We're trying to put some flesh on this," said Graham. "We've gotten a 'vote of confidence' from our board

of directors now we need to do a feasibility study to see how the whole thing would be funded."

Graham said it's likely grant money could fund start-up costs to support the clinic for two years and a flow of grant money and fundraising could keep it going thereafter. He said the hospital would cut the clinic a good deal and several doctors have

•See HEALTH page 12

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From the Internet to bonny Ireland

By Nancy Welch
Contributor

A surf through Ebay led to a pleasant journey through southern Ireland for April Mattox and her brother, Rick Yinger, 15.

"I wanted to go to Ireland and I was checking out deals on the Internet when a friend in the office suggested I try Ebay," Mattox said. "Sure enough, I found a trip with an opening bid of \$699."

Mattox, who looks Irish with her strawberry-blond hair and creamy complexion, placed her bid and then held her breath during the 10-day window for more bids. She and Yinger, a karate instructor and titleholder, were in Atlanta for a large Karate tournament when the bids closed.

Much to her surprise and delight, her bid held and she got the trip. It was then her younger brother expressed a desire to go along. They contacted the people who had put the original trip on the internet and they had a second ticket, so they were set.

The two were exhausted when they reached the airport in Shannon, Ireland but still remember vividly the kindness of the people there.

"We had to find our luggage, go through customs and get our visas," Mattox said. "Every time we would ask directions, someone would take us to our destination. I was amazed by their kindness everywhere we went."

When they picked up their rental car, the agent not only handed them their keys, but took them to the car and showed them how everything worked.

"When we started to throw our bags in the back seat, he acted shocked," she said. "He said, 'Oh no, you have to put everything in the trunk or it will be stolen.'"

He even showed the two the key to the hubcaps. "Why do we need keys for the hubcaps," Mattox asked.

"They could get stolen," the agent said.

Mattox said they were told licenses are not granted until the age of 25 in Ireland, but teens can drink.

"He told us teens had a bad habit of drinking, then stealing cars and taking them for joy rides," she said.

Their first stop was Galway, where they attempted to catch up on their sleep and then walked downtown where they found a long cobblestone pedestrian lined with quaint shops.

Their second day the two drove to Limerick. Along the way they were amazed by the herds of cattle and sheep, who seemed to think the roads were theirs.

In Limerick, they stayed in a hotel on the river that was run by Apache Indians.

"We were surprised that almost all the television there is American," Mattox said. "But we did get hooked on Rugby and watched the matches on TV wherever we went."



The Cliffs of Moher, County Clare, Ireland



Ricky Yinger and sister April Mattox at River Liffey in Dublin.

"The first night we watched 'True Lies' and 'Xmen,'" Yinger said.

Throughout their trip, the two took nightly strolls through towns, often staying out until 2 a.m.

"I can't even imagine how many miles we walked during those seven days," Mattox said.

One night, the two stopped at McDonald's. Both said the service was exceptional and the food was cooked while they waited. "It tasted pretty much like here," Yinger said. "But I think it was a little better. It wasn't as greasy."

Mattox said the Cliffs of Moher are now her "favorite place."

Yinger didn't act so sure. The cliffs drop 700 feet and there are not guard rails. "And," he said. "There is a sign that says 'Extreme danger. Cliff falls continuing.'"

The two then left the West Coast and drove to Waterford, where they toured the internationally known crystal factory.

They explained that each piece of crystal is hand blown, then etched and dipped into an acid mixture. There is a station for each step and the workers must have completed an apprenticeship before they can work on the line.

"They didn't waste one bit of crystal," Yinger said.

Then it was on to Dublin, which turned out to be their least favorite place. "If you think Atlanta traffic is bad, you haven't seen anything," Mattox said.

She said the streets were extremely crowded and buses and taxis didn't stop for pedestrians.

"We were trying to cross a busy street and kept pushing the button to get the walk sign," she said. "But it didn't change. Finally I asked a

gentleman passing by if he could explain to us how to get across the street. He said, 'Look to your right. Look to your left. If nothing is coming, run!'"

Dublin was just a rat race, she said. "Every store had security. Doors were locked, and you had to knock to get in and then the door was locked behind you. There were just crowds everywhere - too many people," she said.

But the two took the opportunity there to visit St. Stephen's Green, home of Trinity College and the famous illuminated manuscript, "The Book of Kells."

They finally left Dublin at 4:30 and sat for an hour and a half in traffic. "It took us three hours to cross Ireland and we stayed in Limerick again at the same place," she said.

The brother and sister spent their final night in Dromoland Castle, the high point of their trip, they both agreed.

"It was so luxurious," Mattox said. "We had to dress for dinner and I hadn't brought anything formal, so we had to go shopping."

Both said they had never eaten such a wonderful meal and were so full, they didn't want dessert, a fact that seemed to upset their server.

"He finally ended up sending us to our room with a box of beautiful petit fours," Mattox said. "And when we got to our room, we had a box of fine chocolates on our pillows. It was wonderful."

The two agree they would like to take more trips. But Mattox wants to go to France and Yinger would prefer Italy. But they both agree on one thing. "We never want to go back to Dublin!" they said.

– News from Chambéry, France, part 6 –

New family, new experiences for 2005

By Megan Lewicki

Highlands Rotary Exchange Student
On January 2, I changed host families. For my first four months in Chambéry I lived smack in the middle of the medieval city in a flat four stories above the cobbled allies which I walked to school and shops each day.

Now I live in the suburbs of Chambéry in an area called La Motte Servolex in a subdivision full of houses situated around cul-de-sacs. I catch the bus for a 20-minute ride to downtown Chambéry and school every morning.

The best part is I now have three adorable little French brothers ages 11, 8 and 6 – Matthew, David and Xavier. This is a new experience for me all together. I've never had any little brothers and my initial opinion so far is I prefer them to sisters. They are very easy to manage and they're predictable. As long as I have candy on hand, I am their favorite person in the world. They love American candy and cookies, especially Oreos, Starbursts, Twix, and occasionally Pixie Sticks. Luckily, my parents brought me a suitcase-full of American junk food when they visited over Christmas.

Xavier, the youngest one, tried a Pixie Stick for the first time and I had a hard time explaining to him that

you're not supposed to eat the paper, just the sugar inside the stick. Either he didn't understand what I was saying, or decided he liked eating the sugar and paper all together – both very probable possibilities.

I have so much fun with all the boys. One evening I helped build a tent in their room. I think I enjoyed it more then they did. They took their mission very seriously and were very particular about which steps to take in order to build the perfect tent.

Little did I know that they did not clear this plan with their mother. She took one look and cried, "Ah! Ça va pas!" English translation: "This is not all right!" She glanced at me and noticed I was a part of the guilty party, obviously not setting any kind of example.

The boys began begging and pleading their mother, they didn't want to tear the tent down. She argued that there wasn't enough room to build a tent in Xavier's bedroom. But of course in a little boy's mind there is *always* enough room to build a tent. I smiled a little embarrassed and replied, "Désolé..." Translation: "Sorry..." Finally my host mother, Marielle made a compromise and allowed them to continue building the tent but not in the bedroom, in the hall. And it stayed



Megan in the doorway leading to her first home – a fourth-floor flat on Rue Juiverie in downtown Chambéry.



Megan and Julie Post in the La Motte Servolex subdivision, Megan's new home, on the outskirts of Chambéry.

there for five days.

I like introducing the American culture to them, and dismissing the stereotypes. The most common stereotype that I am asked to clarify is whether Americans only eat fast food — cheeseburgers, fries, and coke are the three main food groups, apparently. I can see why they would think that — France only has of two fast food chains, McDonald's and Quick, while America has scores of them.

But on a different subject. The number of exchange students is dwindling. What was once eight, is now four. Homesickness is taking over and others find themselves reevaluating why they signed up for this program in the first place.

After a few months, it became painstakingly obvious that this was

not meant to be a vacation. There are rules, guidelines, traditions, and customs that do not coincide with the American culture and some people find it a little overbearing.

Now Rotary is on the edge of its seat wondering who else is going to demand to go home. Some of us are extremely determined to stay for the rest of the term, however, including myself.

One girl, Julie Post from Jamestown, NY, broke her leg while climbing an artificial rock wall during PE at school and even that has not deterred her from staying. I'm sure her parents are very proud, as is Rotary.

***Fun Fact #6: In most French grocery stores, the cashiers sit down and the customers to bag their own groceries.**

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... HEALTH continued from page 9

said they would offer their services for free. "But money would still be needed for supplies, medicine, lab work and x-rays," he said.

"I think Highlands-Cashiers Hospital's Free Health Clinic project would provide a much needed service to our area," said McGaha. "An individual who does not have health insurance, and cannot afford to pay for these services, will have an option for primary care."

She said as a result, quality of life will improve for participants.

The group is applying for 5013c status so it can tap state and federal grant money and receive funds from any foundation or individual who wishes to donate.

• A DAY IN THE LIFE... •

Who am I?



Misty Thomas

This is a question we all have in common. We are asked from a very young age to define ourselves. This definition is usually contrived from what we do, what we like, and who we know. So, here goes.

My name is Misty Thomas. I am a wife, mother, daughter, daughter-in-law, friend, and employee. I have a passion for the arts, a love affair with each of my horses, and possess a genuine interest in the Highlands community.

I am five feet tall, 118 pounds, naturally blonde (I choose to be brunette), I have green eyes, am addicted to junk food, red lipstick, and I think a barn smells better than anything on this planet. Who am I?

Over the past eight years, I have become more than those things. I have become the type of woman who dances, yells, and carries on at Little League games. I am a woman who claps even when the smallest reindeer in the Christmas Parade picks his nose and half the town has it immortalized on

film. I am a woman in love with a man who thinks tickle torture is a great way to spend a Friday night. I am a woman who thinks baby snot looks good on just about any nice garment I own. I am a woman who would give up all of my dreams and my life for people who usually take me for granted. Who am I?

I am a person who shares a bond with people whom I may never know simply because we oppose war, hate, and drunk driving. I am a person who reads the paper, and fears that one day one of my children could be the victim of a car crash, rape or hate crime. I am an advocate of proper school funding, environmental preservation, and age-rated television programming. Who am I?

My name is Misty Thomas, mother of an eight-year-old, six-year-old, four-year-old and two-year-old, farm owner, and full time employee. I have somehow managed to find the humor and sentimentalism in having children and through this column I hope to share with you some of our life experiences. Maybe you will feel compelled to share yours with me.

Who am I?

I am Mommy.

Misty also landed the lead in Highlands Community Players upcoming play "Stepping Out." See article on page 15.

Look for Misty's column in subsequent issues of Highlands' Newspaper.

• BUILDERS & ARCHITECTS •

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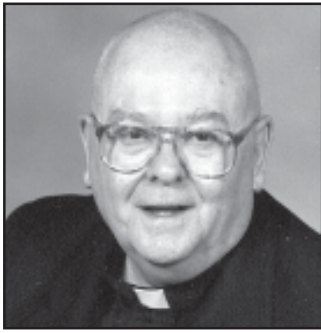


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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

Who is with us?



Father Bill Evans
Our Lady of the
Mountains Catholic Church

The genius of Mr. Charles Schulz who created the Peanuts comic strip was his ability to present his little people in situations with which all of us can identify. Take this episode for instance.

In the first panel of the strip, Lucy says, "my life is a drag. I'm completely fed up. I've never felt so low in my life." Her brother Linus advises her: "When you're in a mood like this, you should try to think of things you have to be thankful for. In other words, count your blessings."

Lucy explodes. "Ha! That is a good one. I could count my blessings on one finger! I've never had anything, and I never will have anything. I don't get half the breaks other people do. Nothing ever goes right for me! And you talk about counting blessings? You talk about being thankful? What do I have to be thankful for?"

Linus responds. "Well for one thing, you have a little brother who loves you." Lucy looks at Linus, and then tearfully hugs him. Linus looks out of the final panel at the reader and comments, "Every now and then, I say the right thing."

Every now and then the scriptures say the right thing, too. It may not be said in exactly the way we would like it, but in the end it is always the right thing.

God says the right thing to Moses in the first reading: "I have witnessed the affliction of my people and have heard their cry of complaint, so I know well what they are suffering. I have come down to rescue them." But then when Moses tries to pin God down about his name, Moses is not quite sure if he likes what he hears.

As the child uses "Mommy says so" as the source of authority to keep other children in line, so Moses wanted to use God's name as his source of authority. God, on the other hand, seems to say to Moses, "You are created in my image and likeness, go on your own authority. I have brought this problem to your attention – I AM with you, but it is up to you to find a solution." So it has been throughout all of history.

The God who liberates us does not liberate us – without us. He frees us to free others. When we ask God to establish peace and justice, to feed the hungry, to shelter the homeless, what do you think he responds? He says: "You do it! I AM with you. And when we don't do it, we have sinned. That is called "the sin of omission" – we omit doing the right thing. That is possibly the greatest and most frequent sin of the Christian human being.

The scriptures always say the right thing but sometimes it is an embarrassment to us. We know in our hearts that securing justice and the rights of all the

• See SPIRITUALLY page 14

• PLACES OF WORSHIP ON THE PLATEAU •

Blue Valley Baptist Church

Rev. Oliver Rice, Pastor (706) 782-3965
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
Sunday night services every second and fourth
Sunday at 7 p.m.
Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting – 7 p.m.

Buck Creek Baptist Church

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
First Saturday: Singing at 7:30 p.m.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

NC 28 N. and Pine Ridge Rd., (828) 369-8329
Rai Cammack, Branch President, (828) 369-1627
Sundays: Worship – 10 a.m.; school & primary
classes – 11 a.m.; Women's & Men's Org. – noon
Tues: Women's Org. – 6:30 p.m.; Library – 6-8
p.m.

Wednesdays: Boy Scouts of America mtg. – 6:30
p.m.; Young women's activities – 6:30 p.m.

Christ Anglican Church

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Clear Creek Baptist Church

Pastor Everett Wilson, (828) 743-3379
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
Prayer – 6:30 p.m.
Evening Service – 7 p.m.

Community Bible Church

(Evangelical Presbyterian Church
Steven E. Kerhoulas, Pastor, 526-4685
3645 U.S. 64 east
Sundays: School – 9:30 a.m.; Worship – 10:45;
Youth "The Rock" meeting.
Tuesdays: Women's Bible Study – 9:45
Wed: Supper – 6 p.m.; Bible Study – 6:45 p.m.

Episcopal Church of the Incarnation

Rev. Brian Sullivan – 526-2968
Sundays: Choir – 9 a.m.; Adult Sunday School
classes – 9:15 a.m.; Holy Eucharist – 10:30 a.m.;
Children's Chapel – 10:30 a.m.;
Mondays: Women's Cursillo Group (Library) – 4
Tuesdays: Men's Cursillo in Jones Hall – 8
Wednesdays: Liturgy Mtg – 4 p.m.; Christian
Education – 5 p.m.; Supper & Program – 6 p.m.
Thursdays: Holy Eucharist – 10 a.m.
Sunday Service is telecast on cable channel 14

First Baptist Church

Dr. Daniel D. Robinson, 526-4153
Sun.: Worship – 8:15 a.m., 10:45 a.m., 6:30
p.m.; School – 9:30 a.m.; Youth – 6:30 p.m.;
Choir – 7:15
Wednesdays: Dinner – 5:30 p.m.; Team Kids – 6
p.m.; Prayer – 6:15 p.m.; Choir – 7:30 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church

Rev. J. Hunter Coleman, Pastor, 526-3175
Sun.: Worship – 11 a.m.; School – 9:30 & 9:45.
Wednesdays: Children's Devotions – 9:30 a.m.;
Supper – 6 p.m.; Choir – 7 p.m.
Thursdays: Bible Study – 10 a.m.

Sat: Adventistas del Septimo Dia – 10 a.m. & 5

Highlands Assembly of God

Rev. Scott Holland, 524-6026, Sixth Street
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study – 7

Highlands 7th-Day Adventist Church

Wednesday evening prayer & Bible Study
Call Lloyd Kidder at 526-9474

Highlands United Methodist Church

Pastors Eddie & Kim Ingram, 526-3376
Sundays: School – 9:30 & 9:45 a.m.; Worship –
8:30 & 11 a.m.
Wednesdays: Supper – 5:30 p.m.; Bible Study &
activities – 6 p.m.

Holy Family Lutheran Church – ELCA

Rev. Delmer Chilton, Pastor,
2152 Dillard Road – 526-9741
Sundays: Worship/Communion – 10:30

Macedonia Baptist Church

8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in
Satolah
Pastor Jamie Passmore, (706) 782-8130
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
Choir – 6 p.m.

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

Mountain Synagogue

St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church, Franklin 369-6871
Friday: Sabbath Eve Services at 7 p.m.
For more information, call
(706)-745-1842.

Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church

Rev. William M Evans, Priest
Parish office, 526-2418
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Saturday Vigil Mass – 4 p.m.
Sundays: Mass – 11 a.m.

Scaly Mountain Baptist Church

Rev. Clifford Willis
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m. & 7
Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg. – 7 p.m.

Scaly Mountain Church of God

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Alfred Sizemore
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 10:45
a.m.; Evening Worship – 6 p.m.
Wed: Adult Bible Study & Youth – 7 p.m.
For more information call 526-3212.

Shortoff Baptist Church

Pastor Rev. Wayne Price
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study – 7
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Rev. Maureen Killoran (part-time)
526-9769

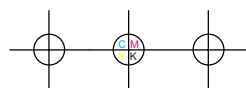
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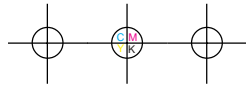
Westside Baptist Church

Interim Pastor, Terry Dixon
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Sundays: Fellowship & Worship – 11

Whiteside Presbyterian Church

Cashiers, Rev. Sam Forrester, 743-2122
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11





... SPIRITUALLY continued from page 13

oppressed is not an impossible dream. Something can be done. Our problem is our own misplaced priorities.

If the scriptures always say the right thing, how should we take Paul's words when he says, "They (the writings in the Hebrew scriptures) have been written as a warning to us, upon whom the end of the ages has come." No other generation in history has had the potential we have, the potential to end the ages. Paul believed that the end of the world would come in his lifetime. We know we can

make it come in our lifetime by our own hands. We can just blow up the world. And maybe the fundamentalist Arabs intend to. That is the real danger of fundamentalism anywhere. The fundamentalist believes he has divine authority to do or say whatever he wants to do or say.

What "right things" are said in today's gospel? Jesus tries to set the record straight. God does not use accidents or tyrants to punish evildoers. Much more mysterious is Jesus' warning as to our fate

if we do not reform. What does he mean when he says, "But I tell you, you will all come to the same end unless you reform? Could he mean that the ivory towers we have built for ourselves may fall in on us if we do not bring about our ideas on peace? Could he mean that if we do not return to the Christian ideal of love of our enemies we will all perish by the sword in which we have put our trust?"

It was G.K. Chesterton who said, "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and left untried."

Peter Maurin picked up on that theme and added, "Christianity has not been tried because people thought it was impractical. Men have tried everything except Christianity, and everything that men have tried has failed."

Our presence here today is our "burning bush" experience. We stand on holy ground to hear God speak to us. His message is twofold, "Reform, and bear fruit."

Every now and then the scriptures say the right thing. We have a God who loves us. That is the consolation.

• HIGHLANDS SERVICE DIRECTORY •

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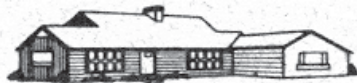
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Hospital applies for new MRI unit recently awarded to county

Efforts to bring a much needed piece of medical diagnostic equipment to the area entered a new phase last week, as Highlands-Cashiers Hospital once again seeks to win approval for a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scanner.

The hospital filed an application for a certificate of need with state officials on Friday asking permission to install a fixed base MRI on the hospital campus.

This is the second attempt to obtain a certificate of need for an MRI in Highlands. Efforts two years ago to win state approval for an MRI here failed when the state's Department of Health and Human Services eventually awarded the certificate of need to Angel Medical Center in Franklin.

Until recently that decision was tied up in an appeal filed by Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. The hospital dismissed its appeal in November, after state health planners determined there was a special need for an MRI unit on the Highlands plateau, approving a second MRI unit for Macon County. That cleared the way for Angel to begin constructing its MRI facilities, and set in motion the application process for the second MRI unit.

The state's determination that a special need existed for a fixed MRI in the Highlands plateau area was the culmination of many months of work by the hospital. The hospital petitioned the State Health Coordinating Council last summer, arguing three main points: MRI services have become the accepted standard of care in medicine today; there is substantial need for those services in the Highlands-Cashiers area; and mobile MRI services are not possible here.

"MRI services have become the standard of care for hospitals in North Carolina," said hospital Administrator Jim Graham. "According to 2004 figures, 89 percent of the state's hospitals had access to either fixed or mobile MRI services for their patients. For our patients MRI services are between 35 minutes to an hour away – and that's in good weather. Our patients deserve access to an MRI here and that's what we've been working very hard to achieve."

The hospital argued that even though Angel will soon have a fixed base MRI in operation, patients from

the Highlands-Cashiers area will still face excessive travel times over potentially hazardous roads. That is not only costly and inconvenient, but could delay diagnosis and treatment decisions and potentially aggravate a patient's condition, the hospital argued. At the same time steep mountain roads make mobile MRI services unfeasible in Highlands – a position supported by the company that provides such services throughout the state. InSight Mobile MRI said the weight and delicacy of the unit would make traveling roads to and from Highlands impossible.

The new MRI will not automatically go to Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, however. Its application for a CON must first be approved by the state.

"Still, we are very hopeful at this point that we will be successful in our application. For one thing, we have the support of a number of county officials, and other hospitals, including Angel Medical Center," said Walt Nussbaum, chairman of the hospital's board of trustees. "A fixed MRI in Highlands is the only option available to meet a very real need, and we believe the hospital is in the best position to provide that service. We remain committed to doing whatever it takes to bring this very important medical service to the people of our communities."

In it's CON application, which runs nearly 100 pages, not including exhibits, the hospital proposes to purchase a 1.5 Tesla MRI unit that will provide an "optimal range of clinical capabilities and is cost effective." That unit is more powerful than other options, but the hospital says it offers a wider range of procedures and consistently better images in shorter time.

According to the application, a survey of area physicians estimates that between 1,200 and 1,300 MRI procedures could be done each year, based on existing need. The hospital projects that number to rise to nearly 2,100 by 2008, the third years of operation. MRI utilization is growing throughout the country largely because the number of diagnostic applications for which the technology can be used is growing rapidly.

By the hospital's estimates, most of the MRI procedures that would be performed here — some 97 percent — would be on an outpatient basis.

• HIGHLANDS SCHOOL SPORTS •

Highlanders vs. Rabun Gap; Rabun County

By Allen Shearl

HS Journalism Class

The Highlanders were back on the road again. This time they traveled to Rabun Gap on Friday, Jan. 14.

The boy's game was very close, the spread was tight until the last few minutes when the Highlanders pulled away to clinch a victory over the Eagles. The final score was 63-52 led by Matt Rice with 18 points and Jason Aspinwall with 15 points.

The girl's game, however, wasn't so close. The Highlands girls won a sound defeat over the Eagles with a final score of 70-28. They were led by Kayla McCall with 18 points and Allison Winn with 15 points.

The Highlanders held their second home game of the season at the Highlands Rec Park on Saturday, Jan. 15. The boys won an exciting game over the Rabun County Wildcats with the final score being 83-68. They were led by Allen Shearl with 19 points and Alec Schmitt with 18 points.

The girls gave it everything they had but fell to the Wildcats in a 59-34 loss. They were led by Toni Schmitt with 9 points and Kayla McCall with 8 points.

"We tried hard but it wasn't our best. We can learn a lot from this game and know what we need to improve on for the next time around," said Angela Aspinwall.

Starting guard Allison Winn sinks a lay-up for Lady Highlanders during a game against Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School last Friday. Lady Highlanders beat the RGNS Eagles 63-52.

Important 'Financial Aid' meeting at school

Highlands School seniors and their parents are urged to attend a financial aid informational meeting on Jan. 27.

Melody Lawrence, Financial Aid Officer at Southwestern Community College will discuss details of financial aid applications and address questions from the audience.

School counselor Patricia Catchings will discuss scholarship applications. The meeting will be held at 6 pm in the Elementary Computer Lab.



Highlands School senior Allen Shearl shoots from the line after being fouled. Shearl is one of the leading scorers for the Highlanders this season.



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Highlands creative director gets good reviews for productions in Atlanta

By Nancy Welch

Robert Ray is receiving high accolades for his production for the Fox Theater's 75th birthday celebration in Atlanta. Ray has been named as creative director for the Highlands Playhouse this summer.

Ray used jugglers, tap dancers, fake snow and a chorus line in the production, according to the "Atlanta Journal and Constitution." Ray's revue was a part of a daylong open house and birthday party at the Fox.

"Ray, who has performed in clubs and musicals from his native Atlanta to Broadway, was asked to create a show capturing the Jazz Age feel of the opening bill," the "Journal-Constitution" read. "He went to the theater's archives and found a program from that day. The movie (on the opening day) was the least of it."

But Ray stays busier than most and his musical cabaret last summer, "Somewhere Over the Rainbow: The Harold Arlen Songbook," also received rave reviews in Atlanta papers.

"With all the multi-talented artists performing, you can close your eyes and imagine you are in a fashionable club," the Atlanta Journal said. "You can even hear the glasses clinking."

Ray will bring four professional productions to Highlands this summer, some of which are already in rehearsal in Atlanta.

"Two Marvelous for Words" played at the Highlands Playhouse for two nights in October and will return by popular demand for the first show of the 2005 season.

This show has also appeared in Macon, Ga., at the Georgia Music Hall of Fame, where Ray and fellow cast members and a six piece band recorded the show in its entirety on CD.

Most recently, Ray produced and directed the 75th Anniversary of the Fox Theater in downtown Atlanta. In February he will direct the Atlanta Lyric Theater's productions of "Jerry's Girls." Ray will bring "Jerry's Girls" to the Highlands Playhouse as the third show of this season.

The second show will be announced soon.

The final play of the season will be the Pulitzer Prize winning "Driving Miss Daisy." This play was made into the Academy Award winning movie of the same name and featured Jessica Tandy, Morgan Freeman and Dan Akroyd.

HCP's 'Stepping Out' set for March

The cast for Stepping Out, the second play of the Highlands Community Players tenth anniversary season, has been chosen following auditions. Performances will be March 3-6 and March 12 and 13 at the Martin-Lipscomb Performing Arts Center on Chestnut Street in Highlands.

Director Tanji Armor says that cast members face a dual task. "Not only do they have to learn their lines and blocking, but they will need to learn a dance routine for the dazzling finale," she said.

"Some members of the cast have some experience in tap dancing while others are neophytes," she added.

But "Stepping Out" is not just about dancing. Each character has a story to tell.

"The interaction between the characters plus the dancing makes this a really interesting play."

Chosen for the cast are Misty Thomas as Mavis, the patient class instruc-

tor with a messy personal life; Sue Feldkamp as Mrs. Glenda Fraser, the acerbic piano player; Nancy Reeder as Andy, the repressed unhappily married professional wife; Ginny Harris as Dorothy, who has the ability to be a good dancer if she could only get in sync.

Also in the cast are Caoline Wilder as Lynne the nurse; Ronnie Spilton as the flashy and loud Maxine; Bonnie Earman as Rose, the down to earth veteran of the garment business; Catlin Huitt as Sylvia who takes the class to get a break from her family; and Mary Adair Leslie as Vera, the cleanliness freak who minds everyone else's business. Justin Taylor plays Geoffrey, the only male in the class.

Choreographer for the production is Mary Adair Leslie.

Tickets for Stepping Out go on sale to season subscribers on February 21 and 22 and to the general public on February 23 at PAC. Tickets may also be reserved by calling 828-526-8084.

• CLASSIFIEDS •

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• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

The following are the Highlands Police Department log entries for the week of Jan 13-19. The only names are of public officials and/or people who were arrested.

Jan. 13

- At 2:45 p.m., officers responded to an alarm at a residence on Bowery Road. It was false.
- At 3:15 p.m., officers responded to an alarm at Fireside Restaurant. It was false.
- At 5:30 p.m., an officer on patrol reported an attempted theft at Twigs.

Jan. 16

- At 7:20 p.m. and 8:05 p.m., officers responded to a domestic dispute at a residence on Wahoo Trail. The occupants were told to stay away from each other.

Jan. 17

- At 9:50 a.m., officers responded to a larceny at the Washing Well where about \$20 was reported missing from a coin dryer.
- At 10:20 a.m., officers responded to an alarm on N. 4th St. All was secure.
- At 9:52 p.m., officers responded to an alarm at a residence on Bruner lane. All was secure.

Jan. 18

- At 4:30 a.m. and at 10:55 p.m., officers responded to an alarm at a residence on Bruner Lane. All was secure.
- At 12:40 p.m., officers responded to an accident with no injuries. The driver was cited for failing to yield to traffic.

Jan. 19

- At 11:37 a.m., officers responded to an alarm at a residence on Bruner Lane. All was secure.

The following are the Highlands Fire & Rescue Department log entries for the week of Jan. 12-19.

Jan. 12

- The dept. responded to a mutual aid call from Cashiers which was cancelled en route.
- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Wilson Road. The victim was transported to the hospital.
- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at Highlands School where a student broke his arm in PE.

Jan. 13

- The dept. responded to an alarm at a residence on Cullasaja Drive. It was cancelled en route.

Jan. 15

- The dept. was first-responders to a home on Satulah Road when a medical alert alarm went off but it was a false alarm..

Jan. 17

- The dept. responded to the report of a brush fire on Whiteside Mountain Road but it was a controlled burn.

Jan. 18

- The dept. responded to an alarm at a residence on Bowery Road which workers set off by mistake

... COMMITTEE continued from page 1

complete, members will begin amending the land use plan – both commercial and residential aspects – which could eventually translate into changes to the town's zoning ordinance.

Facilitator Geoffrey Willett said it will take until spring's end or early summer before a final version is ready for presentation to the planning board.

To address the weaknesses and threats in residential communities, the committee will suggest incorporating housing codes to ensure maintenance and upkeep of structures and yards; the disposal of junk and rubbish; the environmental impact of residential development; and the placement of infrastructure, particularly utility lines.

Requiring underground utilities in

new subdivisions has been discussed at length lately, primarily as it applies to the new Brushy Face subdivision on N.C. 28 south. Original plans called for utilities underground but changed to overhead due to cost restrictions. Current subdivision regulations don't stipulate either – just that they meet code. The board could approve overhead utilities at Brushy Face, even though the planning board and homeowners in the area want the utilities to be underground.

At the Jan. 19 Town Board, commissioners tabled their decision pending negotiations between the developer and homeowners.

Starting with the Jan. 24 land use committee meeting, members will get down to the business of incorporating suggestions into a updated plan.

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... LETTER continued from page 3

The cost of diverting Social Security payroll taxes into private accounts would be \$1-to-\$2 trillion. The government would have to cover benefits – thus running our government much deeper into the hole!

Highest interest rates would follow that would hurt households as soon as this frivolous expense is enacted. You would be hurting people today and cutting benefits in the future.

If the 2001 and 3003 tax cuts are made permanent, their cost over the next 75 years would be five times more than the Social Security shortfall.

Some simple changes might fix the problem.

Raise the tax on wages less than one percent each for employer and employee (current rate 6.2 percent) and the system would be solvent through 2077.

Raise the cap from \$90,000 to \$140,000 on which Social Security would be paid.

The seven million people not covered by Social Security but by state and local employer-operated retirement funds could be brought into the system. Perhaps raise retirement to the age of 67.

So my Highlands friends, please contact our senators and congressman Charles Taylor asking that they not support privatization of Social Security. Instead they need to fine-tune the system that has worked well since 1935 – perhaps using some of the above options.

The incredible debt that has been incurred in the last four years does not sit well with fiscal conservatives. You might also ask that they vote to repeal the hefty tax-cut which contributes mightily to our mounting national debt.

Let's pray that Social Security will continue to assist us in retirement and our children and grandchildren, as well.

This information was gleaned from AARP Bulletin.

Edna Foster, Highlands

Highlands volleyball players receive conference honors

Four players from the Conference Champion Highlands School varsity volleyball team received All-Conference honors for the 2004 season.

Seniors Kayla McCall and Angela Aspinwall, and junior Callie Rawlins were voted All-Conference, and junior Anna Trine was voted Honorable Mention All-Conference by the conference coaches.

Kayla McCall, who led the team in kills and digs, was also selected as the Smoky Mountain Conference Volleyball Player of the Year for the 2004 season.

"Kayla had an outstanding year and Angela did a great job on offense and defense. Callie was the best setter in the conference, leading the team in assists, and Anna developed into a force to be reckoned with at the net offensively and defensively," said Coach Rick Rawlins. "I am very proud of the effort and teamwork our volleyball players displayed this season. I think volleyball is the ultimate team sport, and our success this year would not have happened without

the effort of all of our players."

He said each player on the team had an outstanding game, play, or leadership moment that he will always remember.

"We had two outstanding, almost mistake free, matches against West Oak and North Lincoln (in the state playoffs) that still makes me want to shout with pride for my players," he said.

The other varsity players were senior Iyali Ruiz, juniors Ramsey Ashburn, Maggie Dearth, and Leslie Wilson, and sophomores Toni Schmitt and Becca Wyatt. The assistant coach was Kyle McKim, and the team manager David Tilson.

Highlands coach Rick Rawlins was also named the Volleyball Coach of the Year for the Smoky Mountain Conference for the second year in a row.

Highlands finished the season undefeated in conference matches, winning the conference title and the first round of the state playoffs to finish the year with a record of 15-7 overall.

Improv with Instant Theater on Wednesdays in Oak Square

The Instant Theatre Company's free Improvisation classes for adults has been re-scheduled to meet every Wednesday evening (weather permitting) February through May at 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. in the ITC's Studio on Main at 310 Oak Square.

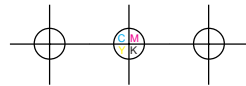
Auditions for musicians and singers are held between 7:30 and 8 p.m. also on Wednesdays. Please call the ITC office (828) 526-1687 to register for the free Improvisation class, or to schedule a music audition.

The free Improvisation class is for persons specifically interested in learning Improv techniques, and who want to perform with The Instant Theatre Company's Troupe. Music auditions are for those musicians and singers who want to

perform on the "Open Mike" segment of the ITC's upcoming Evenings of little Entertainments.

For other community members who enjoy coming to watch the fun but are not interested in performing, watch for next week's announcement of The Instant Theatre Company's, "Evenings of little Entertainments."

Instant Theatre also offers free acting classes for children throughout the year. There is currently space available in the grades 1-4 session, which meets Mondays at 4. All other youth classes are filled at this time. For more information call (828) 526-1687 or visit ITC on the web at www.InstantTheatre.org.



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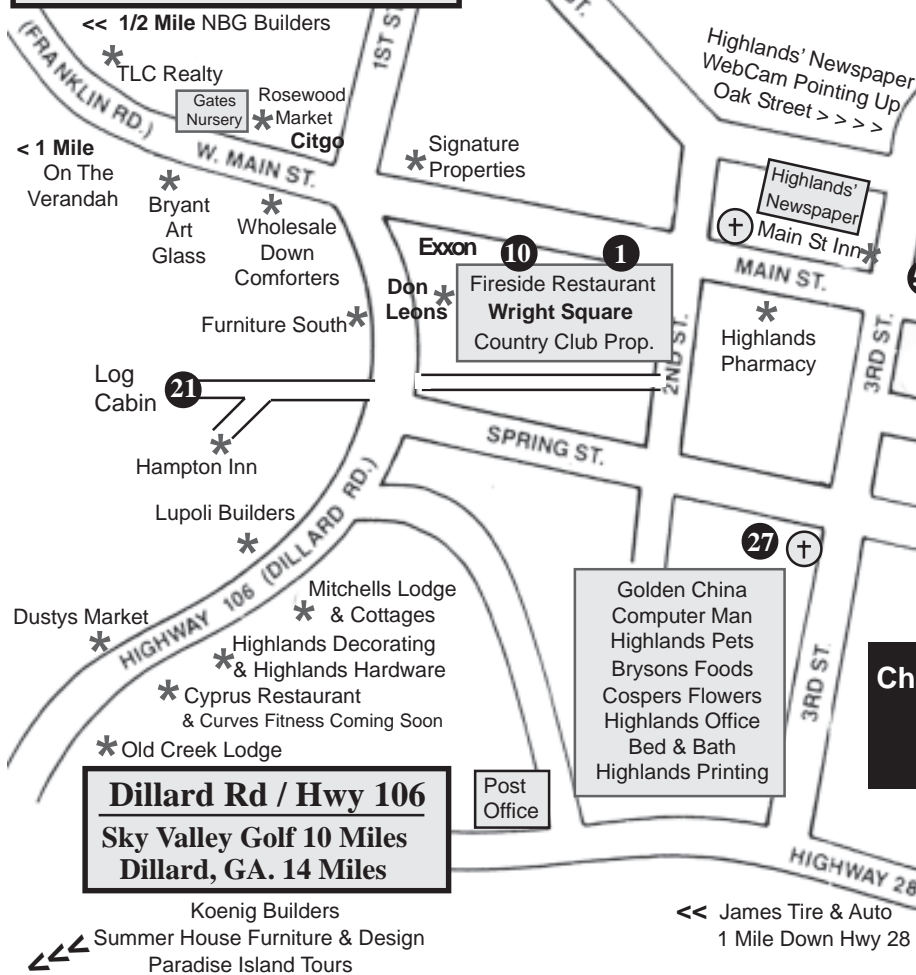
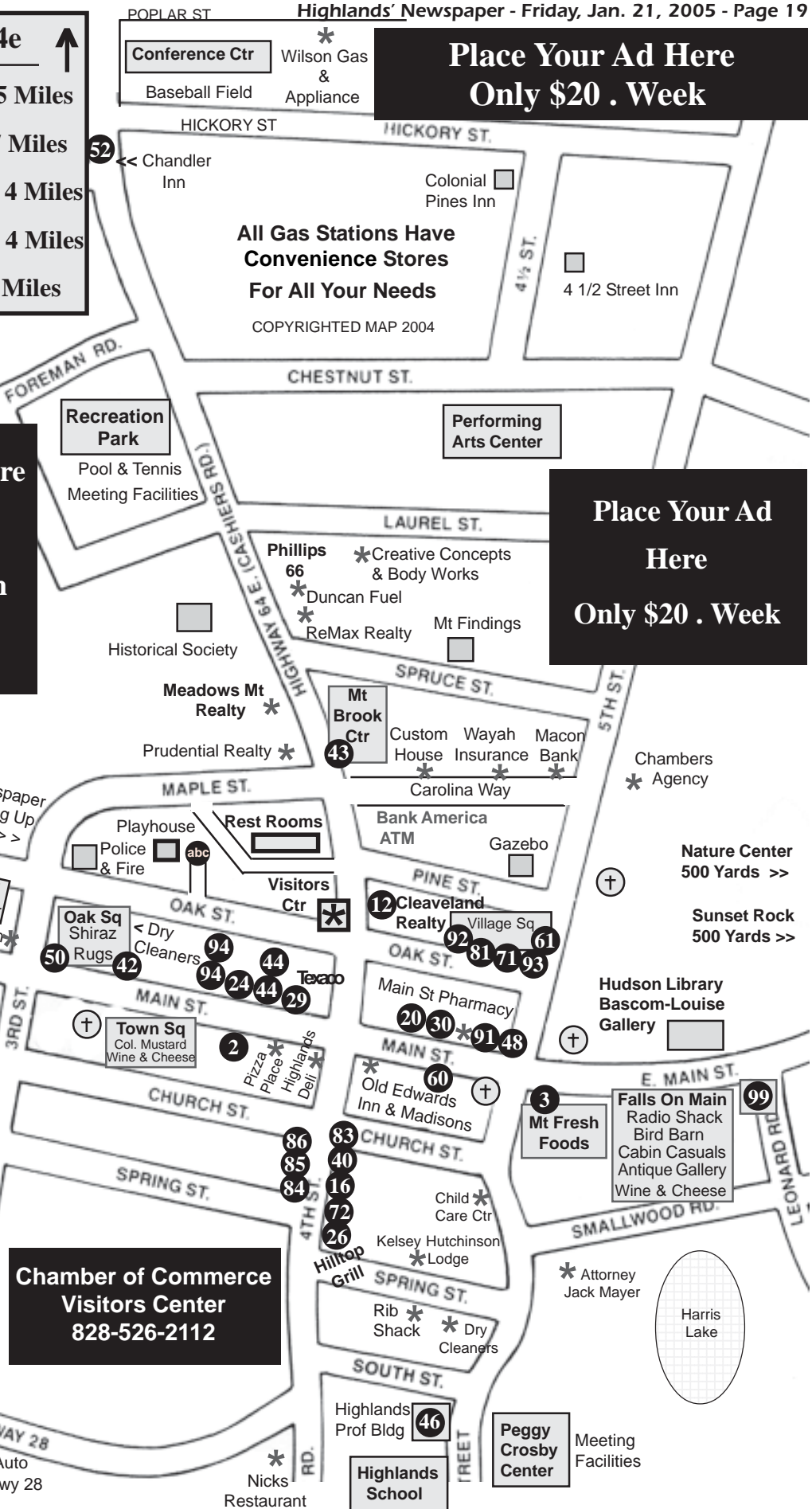
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• UPCOMING EVENTS •

On-going

- The Instant Theatre Company's free Improvisation classes for adults has been re-scheduled to meet every Wednesday evening (weather permitting) February through May at 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. in the ITC's Studio on Main at 310 Oak Square. Auditions for musicians and singers are held between 7:30 and 8 p.m. also on Wednesdays. Please call the ITC office (828) 526-1687 to register for the free Improvisation class, or to schedule a music audition.

- Franklin's Lyric Theater-Choral Society have resumed rehearsals for its debut Valentine's Day concert set for Feb. 12 & 13. New members are welcome. Rehearsals are 7 p.m. For info, call 369-9133.

- Pilates classes are Tuesdays & Thursdays at 5:15 p.m. at the Rec Park. The cost is \$8 per class, but the first class is FREE. Participants need to bring a mat if possible.

- At the Bascom-Louise Gallery - Open Studio with a Live Model 5:30-8:30 p.m. at the gallery. All participants bring their choice of art medium and \$10 to pay for the model and facilitator. This class is

for artists 18 yrs. and older or under 18 with written parent permission.

- Al-Anon Group meets at noon on Thursdays in the Community Room at First Presbyterian Church.

- The Mountain View group of Alcoholics Anonymous meets in the remodeled basement room of the Presbyterian Church sanctuary, Mondays in Highlands at 8 p.m.; Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. (women only); Wed. and Fri. at noon.

- At Highlands Wine & Cheese - Wine Flights Friday and Saturday: 4:30-6:30 p.m. As always, wines by the glass and cheese plates available Wednesday through Saturday: 1:30 until 4:30 p.m. Complimentary Tastings Saturday: 1 until 4:30 p.m.

Jan. 20

- PTO meeting at Highlands School at 7 p.m. Superintendent Dr. Rodney Shotwell and School Board member Donnie Edwards will be there for a special presentation.

Jan. 22

- At the Bascom-Louise Gallery, an exhibit entitled, "The Art League of Macon County," featuring work from the Art League of Highlands and the Macon

County Art Association.

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a strenuous 8.5 mile hike to Standing Indian Mountain via the Lower Ridge Trail, returning via the Appalachian and Kimsey Creek trails. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin (opposite Burger King) at 8:30 a.m. Call leader Al Bruce, 369-2024 for more information.

Jan. 26

- Summit Charter school's fourth grade will be performing a play at the Cashiers Community Center at 2 p.m.

Jan. 29

- Substance Abuse Forum "Let's Talk About It" at Tartan Hall in the First Presbyterian Church in Franklin at 6:30 p.m.

- Voluntary Simplicity - First session 10-11:30 a.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Franklin at 85 Sierra Drive. Learn how your life may be enriched through the practice of knowing how much is enough. How much do we really need? Call 706-746-998.

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 5-mile hike on the Ridge Trail in the Coweeta Hydrolab area. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin (opposite

Burger King) at 10 a.m. Call leader Gail Lehman, 524-5298, for more information.

- Friends of the Library Sale & Open House at East Franklin Shopping Center 9 a.m. -6 p.m.

Jan. 30

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 3-mile hike on the Terrora Trail at Tallulah Falls, Georgia, along the old railroad bed and the Tallulah River. Meet at the Smoky Mountain Hosts Welcome Center on 441 at 2 p.m. or call leader for alternate meeting place if coming from Highlands or Cashiers. Drive 60 miles round trip. Hikes are limited to 20 people; reservations are required. Call leader Kay Coriell, 369-6820 more information.

Feb. 5

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy-to moderate 5-mile hike (with an elevation gain of 300 feet) in Panthertown Valley to three waterfalls and the base of Big Green Mountain. Meet at Cashiers Wachovia Bank at 9:30 a.m. Drive 12 miles round trip, returning 2-3 p.m. Call leader Carl Blozan, 743-1765 for more information.



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