

Highlands' Newspaper

FREE

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On-Going

- At Highlands Wine & Cheese at the Falls on Main, free wine flights Friday & Saturday from 4:30-6:30 p.m.

- "Evenings of Entertainment" Friday nights at Instant Theatre Company in Oak Square on Main Street. Tickets are \$15 with reservations and \$20 at the door. Call for reservations. 342-9197.

March 9 & 10

- Highlands School students in grades K-8 are supporting the American Heart Association by collecting sponsorships for jumping rope and playing basketball. Jump Rope for Heart (K-5) and Hoops for Heart (6-8) will help the A.H.A. fund research and provide grants to find cures for heart diseases.

March 10 & 11

- Highlands School will dismiss at 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 10 for staff development. There will be no school on Friday, March 11 for a teacher workday.

March 12-13

- HCP presents "Stepping Out" at PAC. 8 p.m. on Saturday and 2:30 on Sunday. Call 526-8084 for tickets and info.

March 12

- The 2005 X-Tour (alternative/punk concert) featuring Falling Up, Hawk Nelson, Seventh Day Slumber at 7 p.m. (doors open at 6) at Highlands Rec. Park. You Could Win...I-POD mini, FLIP Skateboard. \$5 at the door. Call 526-4685 for information.

- "Let's Talk About It" Substance Abuse Forum, 6:30 p.m. at Tartan Hall in Presbyterian Church in Franklin. For more information call 349-2426.

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a 4-mile moderate hike to the Devil's Courthouse on Whiteside Mountain. Call leader Jim Whitehurst at 526-8134.

March 13-18

- Roots of the Appalachians — The People and the Culture — at The Mountain Retreat & Learning Centers and Elderhostel International at in Highlands. To register call 877-426-8056.

March 17

- InterChurch Pot Luck Supper at Community Bible Church at 6 p.m. For more info, call Pat Griffin at 526-2418. Wear GREEN!

Volume 3, Number 10

Locally Owned & Operated

Friday, March 11, 2005

Macon Bank plans 'gathering place' for town

Erin Brown
Staff Writer

Thanks to Macon Bank, the town will have a permanent gathering place on Pine Street.

The 83-year-old institution in Highlands for 10 years, is building a new Highlands branch on the .79-acre lot bordered by Carolina Way and Pine Street but is allotting almost a third of

the lot for an outdoor amphitheater.

"We've outgrown where we're at," said Macon Bank President Roger Plemens. "We met with Dennis (DeWolf) a few months ago and realized that this (the green) had become a town gathering place and we want the town to continue using it as a gathering place."

As required, Macon Bank first pre-

sented plans to the Appearance Commission Monday, March 7 and then the applied for a Special Use Permit (SUP) from the Zoning Board on March 9. All new construction requires a SUP.

Both boards overwhelmingly approved the plan and Macon Bank's neighborly spirit. They hope to break ground in May with a move-in date of

▪See **MACON BANK** page 5

Students get big-time reality check from prisoners

Erin Brown
Staff Writer

Reality Check 101 became personal Wednesday morning when Macon County inmates Erin and Bobby shared their personal experiences with Highlands School students.

Walking through the classroom door in bright orange MCDOC jumpsuits, the inmates awkwardly took their seats in front of the sixth-grade class.

Reality Check 101 is a program started by Macon County Sheriff Robbie Holland and his wife, Marci, last year and allows students to see first-hand the damages of drug and alcohol abuse. Bound by leg chains

▪See **REALITY CHECK** page 8

Zoning Board sides with HCC

By Kim Lewicki

Until the Town Board decides to either rezone the Highlands Country Club or close up loopholes in the zoning ordinance, the club can basically do what it wants.

That was the general consensus of the Zoning Board at its March 9 meeting.

"In 1970 when the ordinance was written it was written to let the country club do what ever it darn well pleases," said Zoning Board member Zeke Sossomon. "We can't regulate anything

▪See **HCC** page 6



Photo by Erin Brown

Sheriff Robbie Holland with Macon County prisoners Erin and Bobby who told HS 6th-graders how their life choices landed them in jail.

Understanding annexation & ETJ

Part One – ETJ

Editor's Note: This is a two part series on extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), annexation and water/sewer districts as explained by facilitator Geoffrey Willet at the March 7 Land Use Planning committee meeting. Part One deals with ETJ and its process.

Erin Brown
Staff Writer

Highlands is growing, but the way the town should deal with that growth is under debate. At the Land Use Planning committee meeting Monday, facilitator Geoffrey Willet suggested ETJ and annexation as

possible solutions for the town's growth.

"There's not a perfect system out there, whether you look at North Carolina's laws or any other state. There are pluses and minuses to how all these systems of government are

▪See **ETJ** page 9



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• LETTERS TO THE EDITOR •

Not all doctors agree with FDA

Dear Editor,

Fred Woolridge's article from March 4, 2005 about the FDA immediately caught my eye. He and I share a similar distrust about the quality of work the FDA is doing. However, I take issue with his lumping doctors into the same barrel as the FDA.

You see, I am a doctor, but I am also a victim of the FDA's lack of oversight. As a physician, I depend on the FDA to determine the safety and efficacy of a drug. It is their job to insure that good research and drug testing has been done prior to allowing it on the market. I would love to clone myself into 10 people so I could oversee all this myself, but for now, I must depend upon the FDA, which is a government agency, not a medical one. The FDA is not run by a bunch of doctors. Yes, one is appointed to head the agency, but it is a political position and answers to the executive branch of government. In the wake of this "scandal", Dubya has recommended a committee be formed to help oversee drug trials and safety data, which I thought was the job the the FDA in the first place! Rather than improve the FDA, we'll just fund another layer of bureaucrats with taxpayer money so the cozy relationship between the pharmaceutical industry and government is not disrupted.

You see Fred, this is about corporate power and the ability to market products that cost a lot more than they should; it is about the existence of a market at the mercy of drug companies: we all need health care because we all get sick at some time or another to varying degrees; it is about a health care system called western medicine, which for better or worse, is all about medicines; it is about a health care system held captive by the pharmaceutical industry because western medicine is about science, chemistry, measurable data, reproducible evidence, i.e. tangible stuff. Ours is not a tradition based on faith and energies and meridians and healers, for better or worse.

I don't believe this Vioxx problem is about doctors owning stock in pharmaceutical companies. Perhaps you know doctors who do—I don't know one. Maybe I run with a crowd that takes the high road, but I think the truth is most of us take the oath we swore to at medical school graduation quite seriously: "First, do no harm..." I believe most doctors really do put patients first and our dedication is very deep. I'll be the first to admit there's some rotten apples in the doctor barrel, just as there are in the police barrel, the newspaper barrel, etc.

If we prescribe a medicine, it's because we truly see that its benefit outweighs the risk. If there is one, it's discussed with the patient. We work hard to know all we can about all the new drugs and therapies. We spend hundreds of dollars a year on subscriptions to medical letters, journals, and computer programs that are updated daily which provide complete, thorough information on all the medications we prescribe. We depend on these sources for accurate information. They depend on the FDA. When drug companies are allowed to hold back studies that show potential harm from their drug, then doctors become innocent victims as well. We depend on the FDA to

▪See LETTERS page 3

Don't overmarket Highlands

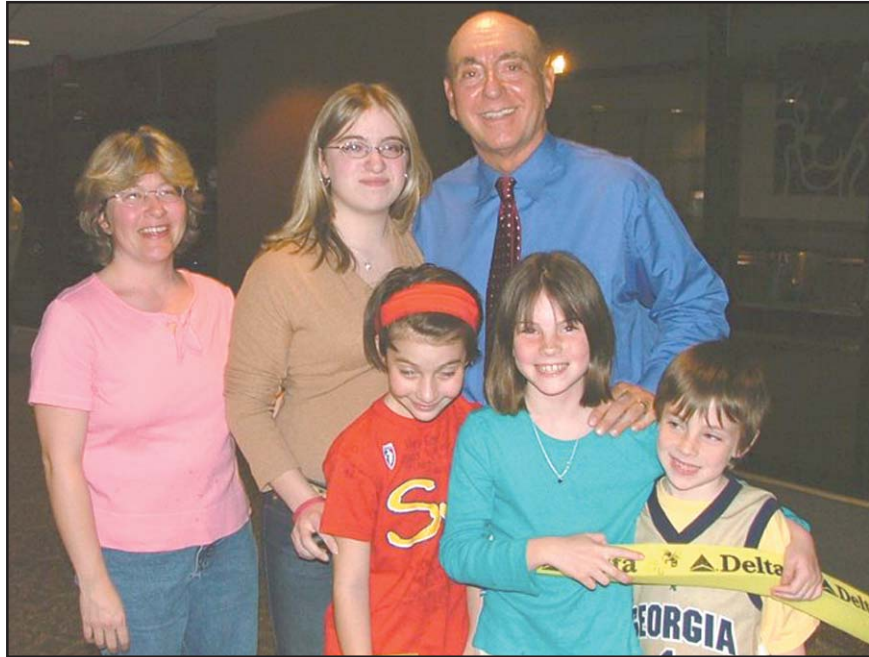
Dear Editor,

New ways to market Highlands?! It's growing fast now, but the present Chamber wants to increase commercialism! Tourists can go to the cities for man-made attractions. Most of us chose Highlands for our home because it is unique with its natural beauty and relaxed atmosphere. We don't want the crowds and pressure of more traffic. Shops and spas can exist anywhere, but our mountain town has forests, waterfalls, lakes and peace. Don't turn us into another Helen or Gatlinburg.

Polly Dean
Highlands



Chance encounters of the exciting kind



On Feb. 23, several Highlanders watched Duke beat Georgia Tech in a close and exciting game. By chance, the group crossed paths with Dickie V after the game! From left are County League basketball coach Michelle Munger, Erin and Emily Munger, Gemma and Gardner Davis with Dickie V.

Photo by Dinah Davis

... LETTERS continued from page 2

scrutinize all the research done on a drug. If they don't do their job, we are all harmed. I'd be the last person who would prescribe something that could cause a heart attack in one of my patients. All the doctors I know feel the same. I don't want to sound defensive and whiny, but we docs have gotten a bad rap at times and I really want to clarify the difference between us and the pharmaceutical industry and us and the FDA. Please don't lump us together.

By the way, I too, really dislike those TV ads that tell us how we're all suffering unbearably from heartburn, social anxiety, or erectile dysfunction...and there's a magic pill your doctor can prescribe that will solve all your problems...(But that's another discussion...)

Dr. Deb Wagner
Highlands

• OBITUARY •

E.H. "Bill" Chastain

E.H. "Bill" Chastain, age 80, of Highlands, NC died Friday, March 4, 2005 at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. He was a native of Macon County, the son of the late Ezekial F. and Martha Picklesimer Chastain. He was a caretaker for V Z Top and was a member of Clear Creek Baptist Church.

He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Vivian McCall Chastain; two sons, Den Chastain and his wife Marcia and David Chastain and his wife, Anita, all of Highlands, NC; two sisters, Mozelle Burrell of Highlands, NC and Etta Nielsen of Palm Coast, FL; one brother, Ken Chastain of Highlands, NC; four grandchildren, Zeke Chastain, Waylon Chastain, Danae Westendorf and Shelbi Chastain all of Highlands, NC; one great-grandchild, Will Chastain of Highlands, NC.

Funeral services were held Monday, March 7, at 2 p.m. at Clear Creek Baptist Church with Rev. Everette Wilson and Rev. Kenny Kilby officiating. Burial was in the Church Cemetery. Bert McCall, Yogi McCall, Eric Chastain, Gary Wilson, Charlie Hicks and Phillip Nix served as pallbearers.

The family received friends Sunday March 6 from 7-9 p.m. at Bryant Funeral Home in Highlands.

Bryant Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

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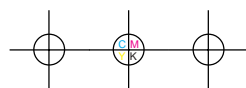
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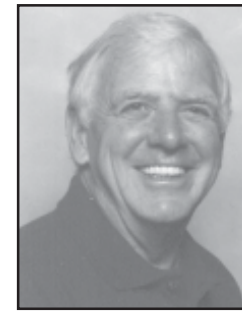
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• LAUGHING AT LIFE •

Highlands' poop rears its ugly 'head,' again

There are many reasons I could never be a politician but the biggest reason is that I don't grovel very well. To be a good Highlands' politician, one must be able to grovel gracefully while making it look like you are not groveling. I think we are very fortunate to have our current town board because they do it best.



Fred Wooldridge

six months over another juicy steak.

But the comment of the evening which takes the prize came from Commissioner Davis who allegedly said (allegedly is a word we big shot reporters use to keep from getting sued) he was surprised at how much money is coming down

the mountain. Wait... if the county commissioners don't know how much money we are sending them, let's stop sending them so much.

Highlands is Macon County's golden goose. For decades, Highlands has been sending the big bucks down the mountain with little return. If Macon County did not have Highlands' funds, it would be in serious financial trouble. But Macon County does not treat us like the golden goose, but more like Mrs. Farley's crippled chicken.

Mind you, I am not personally involved in this issue. I am currently saving all my poop in a large tank in my back yard, even though there is a sewer line within a stone's throw. I am not one of the fortunate 677 people who use the treatment plant, but if I were, you can be sure I would be after those county commissioners to send us more money. I would want to know exactly how much money we are sending them and exactly how much money they are returning in services. I remember, years ago, Mayor John Cleveland got his shorts in a wad over the lack of funding from Macon County, proving this has been going on for years.

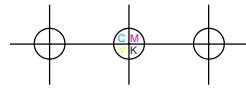
So why do Highlands' politicians have to act in this manner? Because Macon County has "all the marbles." If we play hard ball, they will not even sit down with us over a juicy steak. Groveling is all we have.

Maybe it's time to find another county for Highlands to live in. I personally like Transylvania County. Would that be cool, or what? Then, when a politician refuses to fund our needs, we could say to them, "I want to suck your blood." That ought to get things moving.

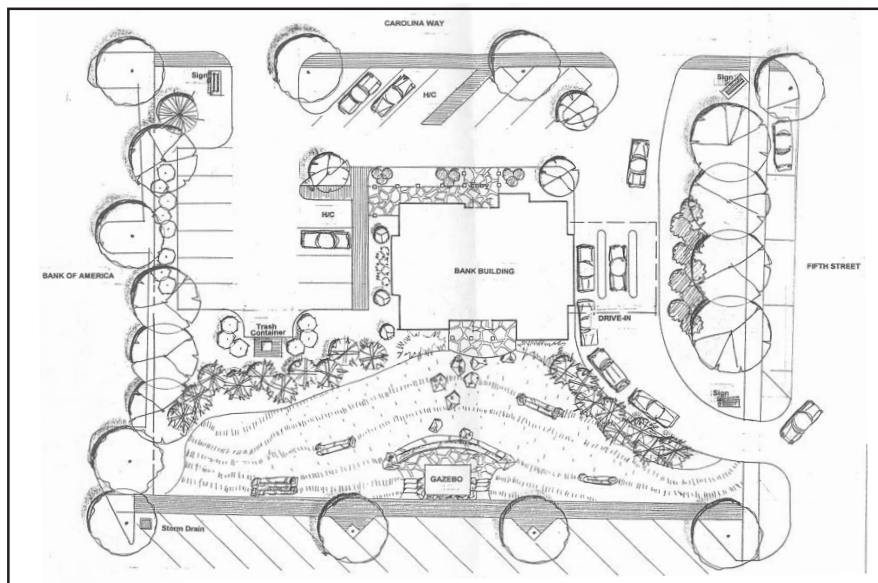
Case in point is when our Town Board recently met socially with Macon County Commissioners to have a friendly chit chat over a juicy steak on what to do with all of Highlands' poop. While the meeting was described as "light conversation" what is really going on is that our town board is there to grovel for money for our waste treatment plant and the county commissioners are there to say "no" or, at best, "maybe." When one county commissioner was pinned down about funding he profoundly said, "What's for dessert?" At that same gathering, Commission Chair Allan Bryson supposedly said, "Say whatever is on your mind." Ha, if I were on the town board, Bryson would only say that once. He would never make that mistake again. So you can readily see, I might not be a good thing for Highlands' future groveling.

In my ugly world of the past, politicians got dirt on other politicians and then used that information to blackmail them into submission. For example, funding for protective vests for police officers came easier when you had the goods on a politician for unscrupulous activity. Information is power. If you found a few skeletons in their closets or found their hand in the till, you would use that as leverage to get the funding you needed. Ugly, but it worked.

Here in Macon County, things are obviously different. When one politician says to another, "There is a need for long range planning," or, better still, "I'll look at the numbers and get back to you" that means let's put this off and talk about it again in



... MACON BANK continued from page 1



March 2006.

Landscaping plans for the green area include moving the current gazebo downhill adjacent to the current sidewalk on Pine Street. But the property is zoned B-3 with a 25-foot set back requirement. Where architect Dennis DeWolf and Hank Ross want to put the gazebo is adjacent to the sidewalk, creating a setback violation.

"We do want to preserve the gathering place in Highlands if at all possible," said DeWolf. But to make best use of the property the gazebo needs to be moved. "This puts us in a position of having to ask for a variance from the zoning board, which puts the board in an awkward position," he said.

At Wednesday's Zoning Board meeting, the gazebo was not part of the scenario. "They want to withdraw the gazebo until an amendment can be redrawn to perhaps allow the setback variance for this one structure, this one time," said Zoning Administrator Larry Gantenbein. He said that's an issue for the Town Board.

DeWolf reminded the commission that last year, the zoning board OK'd a variance for the Highlands School gymnasium. The legally sanctioned volleyball court had to have a certain ceiling height but the town's height requirement cutoff is 35 feet.

"We couldn't give them a variance for it so we amended the ordinance to say that every building in town has to be 35-feet-high except the Highlands School gym which is in the GI zone," said Gantenbein. DeWolf said that they didn't want to draw the gazebo out of the picture completely because they were struggling to find a way of keeping it. "It seems like it's really worth the effort," he said. A variance wouldn't be granted because Macon Bank can clearly

make reasonable use of the property regardless of the gazebo's placement.

Physically blending in with the community is of utmost importance to Macon Bank. DeWolf Architecture and Ross Landscape Architecture have worked hard designing a building that remains in the character with Highlands while incorporating a parklike atmosphere for what will remain of the green.

"We talked with Dennis about trying to build as far up the hill as we could to try to preserve that space," Plemens said. "I think he's done that"

The main bank building is two stories at 31 feet 6 inches high. It includes drive-through access and another drive with a parking area for customers entering the bank. A large two-story atrium will overlook the green. Offices, a conference room and a large stone patio will also be incorporated.

The main entrance faces Carolina Way across from Mountain Fitness and the drive-through with separate ingress and egress off Fifth Street and Carolina Way. Macon Bank wanted to maintain a Carolina Way address, which puts the gazebo in its "backyard."

Landscape Architect Hank Ross said the trees along the perimeter of the lot will stay and a brick sidewalk is planned along Carolina Way.

For the green, Ross envisions grass terraces to create lawn seating for outdoor concerts and public gatherings. Large boulders will spread out into the amphitheater like "visual" footsteps towards the gazebo.

"These stones will pull the gazebo and the entire site together aesthetically," said Ross. "Also the rocks are like sculptural elements on a sea of grass for kids to sit on or play on and they kind of fall all the way down to the gazebo area."

■ See **MACON BANK** page 16

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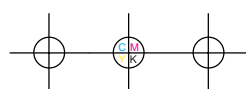
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HS coaches reach milestones

Butch Smart, head boys basketball coach and athletic director at Highlands School, has been named the Smoky Mountain Conference Coach of the Year.

The Highlanders were Little SMC co-champions this season, advancing to sectional playoffs before falling to Cherokee in a close match on Wednesday, Feb. 23.

This season was Coach Smart's ninth year with the Highlanders and his 37th year of coaching.

"Coach Smart is a true student of the game, someone who loves basketball and is totally committed to his players," said Principal Monica Bomengen.

Assistant Principal Mark Thomas agrees. "I have been around a lot of basketball coaches and have seldom been more impressed with anyone than I am with Coach Smart," he said.

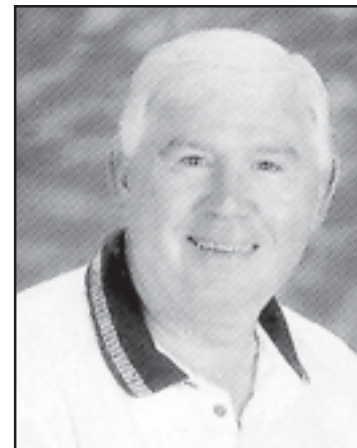
After seven years with the Lady Highlanders, head coach

Bill Lanford has decided to step down from the varsity girls basketball post.

The Highlands girls led the Little SMC for much of the regular season, and then faltered in the tournament, ending a season that featured several thrilling close games. This season was Coach Lanford's 34th. He will stay with the Highlands basketball program as coach of the middle school girls



Butch Smart



Bill Lanford

"He is one of the most dedicated coaches I have ever worked with. I am very pleased that he has agreed to continue working with our girls program in the middle school," said Bomengen.

Mr. Thomas said Coach Lanford has given his heart and soul to the program for many years. "We are proud to have him as a member of our staff and a leader of our

... HCC continued from page 1

due to the way the ordinance is written."

With that in mind, members overturned Zoning Administrator Larry Gantenbein's denial of a zoning permit to remodel and enlarge the Highlands Country Club clubhouse/restaurant.

"If there is a conflict we're supposed to give the benefit of the doubt to the applicant," said member Alan Frederick. "We can't deny them their constitutional property rights."

It all revolves around the definition of restaurant. According to the zoning ordinance it's "a place of business where food is prepared and served, where seating is provided for the consumption of food."

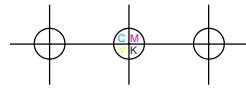
"But is it a business?" asked Gantenbein. "It's a private club where people don't pay for their meals," he said. "The county health department doesn't consider it a restaurant and doesn't even inspect the facility."

Then there's a location problem. Restaurants in Highlands are only allowed in B1, B2 or B3 areas. The Highlands Country Club clubhouse/restaurant is a grandfathered use in R1.

"I don't have a horse in this race," said Gantenbein. "But it's my job to protect the town. You are charged to interpret the ordinance when it's unclear," he said to the board.

He said now that the country club is on the town sewer what it does impacts the town infrastructure. Perhaps the club should be charged \$100 per seat in the clubhouse/restaurant like every other restaurant in town, he said. "But that will be a Town Board decision."

Architect Jeff Weller said the club doesn't intend to increase its seating capacity, just the size of the building. "It for the same number of members, we're just trying to make the space more comfortable."




Changes await OK from BOE

The School Improvement Team met Feb. 28 and incorporated the suggestions of the Highlands School faculty and approved the 2005-2008 plan.

The cornerstones of the School Improvement Plan include specific strategies for :

- Improving communication between the school and parents;
- Ensuring reading success at grade level for elementary students by grade 3 and within 3 years for nonnative speakers of English;
- Implementation of an Advanced Placement program in the high school;
- Upgrading our technology infrastructure;
- Augmenting our vocational education program;
- Establishing a program of true differentiated instruction that addresses students' diverse learning

– Correction –



In the March 4 issue of Highlands' Newspaper, we mis-identified Macon County School Board member Tommy Baldwin as Tommy Cabe. Pictured are school board members Donnie Edwards and Tommy Baldwin with tech guru, Dee Cox at the Feb. 28 school board meeting. We regret our error and are happy to set the record straight.

needs; and

- Jumpstarting our K-8 gifted education program.

The plan will be submitted to the board of education for approval at its March meeting at Highlands School.

– **Principal Monica Bomengen**



Photo by Catlin Huitt

Mrs. Hedden's second grade class looks at The World of Science Tour projects displayed in the school gym on Wednesday.

Students create winning projects

By Catlin Huitt and Erin Munger
Grade 12

The World of Science Tour, formally known as the Highlands School Science Fair was held Wednesday, March 9.

All students were encouraged to participate in the World of Science Tour. Students in grades 6-8 were required to enter a project as part of their third-semester science grade.

Projects were judged on March 9. Judging was held for projects from grades 6-12 with ribbons awarded for first, second, and third place winners. All participants receive a certificate and participation ribbon and should consider themselves winners just for completing a project and having fun with science.

First place winners of the "The

▪ See **PROJECTS** page 12

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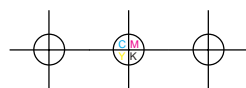
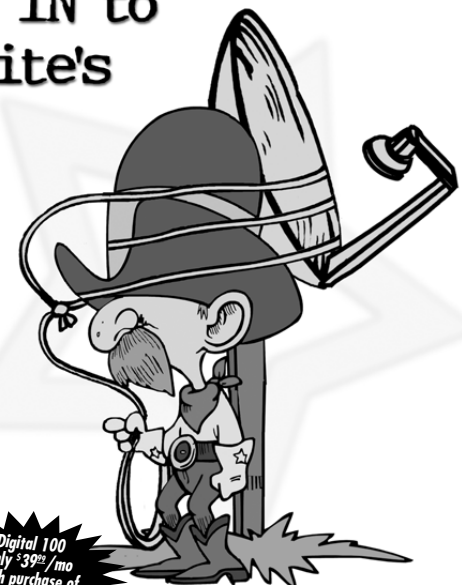
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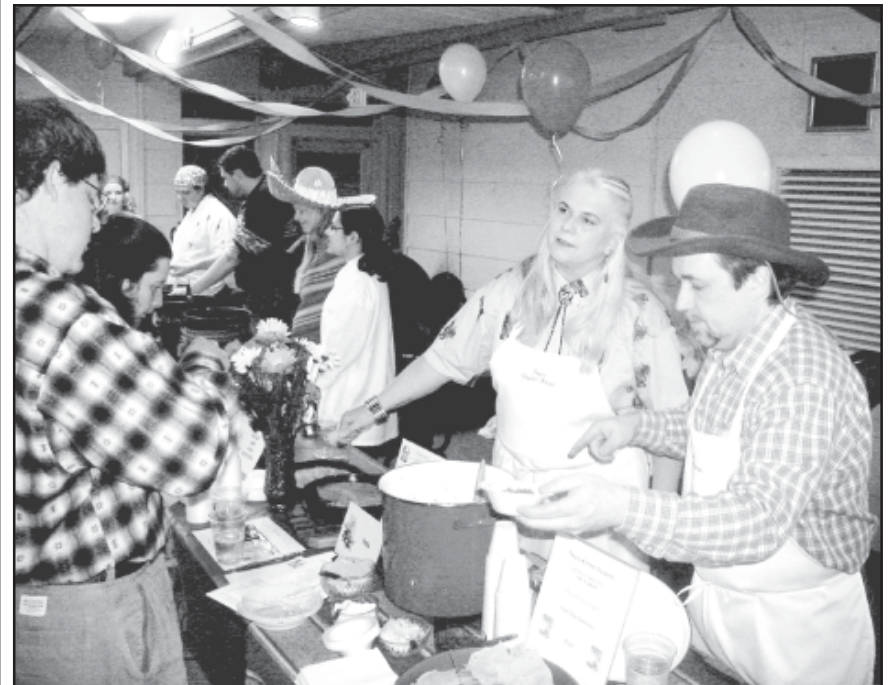
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Chili Cook-off & Salsa Winners



Thea and the Green Man serve up chili and salsa at the festival held at the Highlands Conference Center March 5. The winners were: Best Presentation: Lindy Womack; Best Dressed Chefs: Nate and Martha Waughman; Best Salsa Overall: Penny Collins; Best Fruit Based: Lindy Womack; Most Unusual: David Warth; Best Chili Overall: Nate and Martha Waughman; Best Traditional: Lesley and Russ Bedford; Best; Non-Traditional: David McGlade; Hottest: David Warth

Photo by Erin Brown

... REALITY CHECK continued from page 1

and handcuffs the inmates reflected what their lives had become after years of drug abuse.

"This is an opportunity for these kids to see real people who have lived through it and are continuing to live with it," said Holland.

Holland took the program to the Macon County School Board for approval as part of his substance abuse task force for students in sixth grade and above.

"We've gotten a lot of support from the community and that helps," Holland said.

Teachers and students listened intently as Holland explained the dangers of drugs and the horrifying consequences that can happen as a result of taking them.

Inmate Erin shared that she began taking cocaine when she was 13-years-old and that she had tried every drug there was to try.

"It got me in a lot of trouble," she said. "If I could take it all back I would."

She told the students about the sores that broke out all over her body and that she came very close

to overdosing a few times.

"I got trash fever, which is when you take too many drugs and it makes you really sick," said Erin. "It makes you feel like you're going to die."

At 22 years old, she has been in and out of jail 14 times and said that she will probably do it again.

"When I first get out I'm very good, but then after a month since I'm around the same people, I start up again," she said.

Holland said that there are no resources in Macon County for drug addicts and that what Erin needs is a rehabilitation program.

"The county is working on that now, but there are no programs now that work with drug addicts," Holland said.

With only a sixth-grade education it makes it virtually impossible for Erin to find employment to support herself and her two-year-old son.

"When my son comes to visit me at the jail there is a plastic partition between us and he climbs up

▪See REALITY CHECK page 16



... ETJ continued from page 1

Highlands' Newspaper - Friday, March 11, 2005 - Page 9

authorized," Willet said.

ETJ started in North Carolina in the 50s when towns wanted the ability to regulate the use of property located outside their jurisdiction. ETJ was established as a way to create a buffer around the town through the enactment of zoning ordinances without actually annexing the land.

In 1959 the state legislature added a statewide municipal ETJ authority for entities with populations of 2,500 or more enabling them to reach outside their corporate limits, but only up to one mile. In that area, they could enforce zoning or subdivision ordinances, but nothing more.

In '61 the population rule was reduced to 1,250. Changes made to the ETJ laws in '71 are the laws in use today. They state that a town with a population of up to 10,000 can exercise a one-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction outside its corporate limits.

Typically, a piece of a lot that extends outside the one-mile boundary cannot be included in the ETJ.

"The whole lot should be included," Willet said. "If you have a 20-acre piece of property that extends beyond the one-mile boundary it's not recommended that it be included."

Surprisingly, when a piece of property isn't contiguous with a town's boundaries, but ETJ is still desired, a satellite ETJ can be designated.

"You can just create a little isolated island with ETJ?" asked Patrick Taylor.

Property within the ETJ area is subject to ordinances adopted under Article 19 of the North Carolina General Statutes. Article 19 mainly deals with zoning and subdivision ordinances, sedimentation and erosion control and the preservation of historic properties. General police powers cannot be extended into the ETJ because it must specifically be in

Article 19 for it to be included, and that is considered more of a town service.

Residents in the ETJ do not pay taxes – as such town services like police powers are not offered — and they don't vote in the general election.

However, there is currently a bill before the North Carolina legislature that could allow the residents in an ETJ area to vote in the general election.

"That bill has more legs on it this time around than it's had in times past," Willet said.

There is a requirement for representation for residents in the ETJ on the planning board and the zoning board of adjustment, which is proportional and collective even if the ETJ is split into separate entities.

Even though the ETJ'd area becomes in a sense a part of the town, with ETJ, the county makes the initial appointments to the planning and the zoning board.

"If the population of the ETJ happens to the same size of the town then the representation has to be 50/50," Willet said.

Before a town can even think about using ETJ to extend its boundaries, several steps must be taken.

First the town must identify the area with a description in the way of a map or summary. Once the area is determined, a public hearing is set and notice requirements are mailed to the residents in the proposed area. Once the public hearing has been held the elected body is free to vote. If ETJ is "elected" then property in the jurisdiction becomes subject to the town's subdivision or zoning ordinances.

"It takes a short amount of time to establish the ETJ, but going in and changing the ordinances can take months," Willet said.

In some cases a moratorium can be placed on the ordinances while the changes are being made but Willet warned against this.

"I'm always nervous about moratoriums, and I recommend not to have moratoriums, but there are cases where they are needed," Willet said.

Willet said that the idea behind ETJ is that "you're not going to sock it to them" by enforcing stricter ordinances outside the original town limits than whatever they may be inside the town.

- In the March 18 issue of Highlands' Newspaper, see part two – annexation and water/sewer districts.

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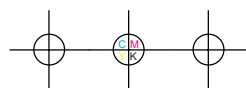
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The origins of Hodges' eclectic works of art

Erin Brown
Staff Writer

There is no doubt that Clay Hodges has been around the world and back again, and again and again.

Originally from the small Florida town of Okeechobee, Hodges started painting at the age of five and with his monumental talent he has traveled the globe studying different art forms.

"The best way to learn about art is to live around it," Hodges said. "And that's what I did."

Hodges' friend Richard Banks introduced him to Margaret Rockefeller (of THE Rockefellers) and she invited him as a "traveling companion" to France.

"She said why don't you come work for me in France, and I said 'Margaret, what am I going to do for you?'" Hodges said with a chuckle. "She had tons of servants and drivers, but she just said, 'You can be my traveling companion.' So I went."

They traveled over on the Queen Elizabeth II and spent the summer in the south of France.

While in Paris, Hodges ran into an old girlfriend from California, who married an Italian duke and was living in Italy. She invited Hodges to live with them for a while in Italy.

"I loved living in Florence," Hodges said. "I lived in 350-year-old villa and studied original frescos."

From Europe, Hodges made his way back across the Atlantic to Buenos Aires, Argentina and tried his hand at producing theater.

"I designed sets and wrote scripts," Hodges said. "The year I was there, we won best musical comedy of the year for Caligula."

Apparently, the Argentine government had to approve the play in order for it to be shown to the public.

"They had no idea it was a slam to them," Hodges said. "We just showed them a lot of skin and



Clay Hodges

they loved it."

Hodges has also traveled in the Philippines, Thailand and India where his son, David was born.

Hodges returned to the states with his son in 1993 and after living in Washington D.C. for a year, settled in Easley, South Carolina where he began a faux finishing business.

Hodges studied faux finishing in Vero Beach, Fla., at Faux Effects, where he also became an instructor. He has also taught five faux finishing classes on HGTV and has appeared on Fox News.

Hodges discovered the Highlands-Cashiers area through a good friend, Betty Ballenger, who hired him to do some interior design work for her. Through that connection Hodges became very popular in the area and therefore was in high demand. He has just recently finished a Highlands home interior with a luster stone finish.

Hodges said that at one point in his artistic career he was making more than \$2,000 a day for his work.

Hodges has no doubt created masterpiece after masterpiece in homes across the country. He is skilled in frescos, murals, faux veneers such as marble, wood grain, granite and trompe l'oeil and a multitude of other mediums.

After struggling for three years with prostate cancer he was off again to South America, this time to Chile.

"I just love their culture," Hodges said. "They are so laid back and easy going."

In Chile, Hodges established three trade schools for the underprivileged to learn carpentry, metal working and other valuable skills.

"Barbara Lyon helped me so much in starting those schools," Hodges said. "We met several times with President Lagos and he helped a great deal also."

His latest project is now ongoing in Costa Rica where he is helping a friend create a posh resort for the rich and famous.

Some of his unique furniture can be seen in at Instant Theatre on Main Street above the Sports Page.



A very one-of-a-kind table on display at Instant Theatre.

– News from Chambery, France, part 7 –

Weekend excursions

By Megan Lewicki
Rotary Exchange Student

The past couple of weekends have been interesting. I went snowboarding in the French Alps with Rotary and all the exchange students in our district. Rotary even paid instructors for the first timers. I had only been snowboarding once before, and ended up breaking my wrist. When I heard there'd be someone to show me the ropes, I was very relieved.

The instructor taught us all the basics, except how to stop or keep from going too fast. At the top of the hill I raced down to the bottom and the board gathered so much speed I was sure I was going to crash into someone and break something else. I realized then what the instructor hadn't taught us. I threw myself down in the snow, gripping handfuls and trying to slow down. When I reached the top of the hill again, I told the instructor that I didn't know how to stop, his reply was (translated in English for you) "I

know I saw!" followed my howls of laughter. But he still refrained from showing the class how to stop. So I guess I'll never know.

The following weekend I went to St. Lothain in central eastern France, part of the old Franche-Comté province, for a wine tasting festival celebrating the "vin jaune" or yellow wine. It's very different from any wine I've ever tried. It's very heady and powerful; some French refuse to drink it and hate the taste.

At the festival everyone was in high spirits. There were bands playing on every corner, the town was very pretty, and the wine was delicious. I took a picture with the *confrérie viticole*, which is an association that acts as the festival's hosts and hostesses and its members are the "life of the party." My host family told them I was an American exchange student. The man beside me was very excited about this and gave me a kiss on the cheek.

Since I've been here I haven't really felt any "American hostility."

Anytime someone hears I'm from America, they smile and ask me a million questions about the USA. They usually hold no preconceived notions or stereotypes. We'll normally joke around about the way Americans and the French are perceived.

The only thing I've noticed is when another exchange student and I speak English to each other we'll hear French teenagers mimic our voices or show their annoyance some other way. And in all honesty I can see why they'd be mad; it's their country and we should be speaking their language. I guess they think we don't care



Megan attempted snowboarding in the French Alps on a recent Rotary trip.

enough about the French language when we speak English to each other.

February 24 was my six-month mark. I'll be home in another five months. I don't consider myself fluent in French yet, but many tell me that I am. I'm beginning to dream in French. It's very strange but wonderful.

I hope to do many more things before I return to Highlands. My friend Julie and I swear we're going to go sky diving in the spring. (You only have to be 16 to do it!) In April Rotary is taking all of us exchange students around Europe for 15 days. I have many things to look forward to over the next five months, see you all soon!

***Fun Fact # 7: The French make their snowmen with just two balls — a middle and a head. There is no third ball as the base. When I first saw that, I thought perhaps they had run out of snow. But that's the way they do it and they were very confused when another exchange student and I made our American version of a snowman.**



At a wine tasting festival at St. Lothain to celebrate "vin jaune," Megan got a kiss for being an American from a member of *confrérie viticole* – the organization hosting the affair.

Photos by Megan Lewicki

Macon Bank gives library \$50,000



Roger Plemens (third from right), Macon Bank's CEO, presents a \$50,000 pledge to the Friends/Library Building Fund. Also present at the informal ceremony are (from left) Karen Wallace, public library manager; Randolph Bulgin, County library Board chairman; Bob Moore, honorary chairman of the building fund campaign; Plemens; Ed Shatley, chairman of Macon Bank's board of directors; and Roberta Swank, president of the Friends of the Macon County Public library.

OEI ammends plan for 4th St.

Erin Brown
Staff Writer

At the March 14 Appearance Committee meeting the latest Old Edwards Inn & Spa project was reviewed.

Since plans for the 1,000-seat plus theater have been nixed, OEI came to the committee for the first step in renewing its special use permit for the addition and renovation of a the two-story building on the corner of Fourth and Church streets.

The building houses The Christmas Tree and Pescado's and those shops will stay as they are, but the space above them will be renovated to house a conference/business center. Below and behind the shops a fitness facility and mezzanine is planned.

As is Old Edwards Inn's trademark, the project will preserve the natural

character of the streetscape this time with a half-timbered effect constructed of brick, stone and wood. Slate roofs and awnings will correspond with the existing OEI structures and the palette will mirror the current color scheme of OEI.

Committee members asked for some sort of master lighting plan for the project and an update on a streetscape plan for Church Street.

Committee member Peter Jefferson asked if the "half-timbered effect" could be modified so that the building would be more consistent with the town architecture.

"It's dissimilar in terms of material and was not in character with Highlands or what OEI had done in the past," he said.

OEI's Summerour Architect Kjell Carlson said that because the building was so big the designers were trying to "make it look as though it were several buildings instead of one giant building."

Jefferson recommended that they revisit that idea and Carlson said they would take "another look at it."

The recommendation was forwarded to the zoning board.

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... PROJECTS cont. from page 7

World of Science Tour" were Matt Potts and Olen Schiffli – "Which electrical appliances will work by a generator powered by a bicycle." Amanda Bruce – "Is what you see is what you get?" Luke McClellan and Andrew Billingsley – "How much oxygen is in the air we breathe in Highlands?" Jamie Bolt and Brice Jenkins – "Does the amount of time you spend in a spa effect your blood pressure?" Chase Jenkins – "Dissolving Gases." Devin deHoll and Kenny Robinson – "Why will the salt and water solution conduct electrically?"

Second place winners were Haley Chalker, Sarah Powers and Courtney Rogers, Lacey Tucker and Marlee McCall, Ezra Herz and Mikey Lica, Lucy Herz and Sarah Bates, Beverly Nix and Stephanie Punchaz.

Third place winners were Sarah Moses and Marisol Ruiz, Clay Lassiter, Danielle Reese, Casey Jenkins, LaDonna Rodriguez and Sarah Hedden, Brie Schmitt and Haley Rice.

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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

The light of the world



Rev. William Evans, Priest
Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church

We are all reminded of this each morning when we wake up. The red, gold and purple of the sun has destroyed darkness in our part of the world and this will happen every single day until the end of the world as our planet. Without light, there is no life.

We are asked to reflect on this truth in the reading when Jesus says, "I am the light of the world." Or, even more important for us, to better understand what Jesus meant when he said in the Sermon on the Mount, "You are the light of the world."

As Samuel set out on his divinely dictated mission to choose and anoint a successor to King Saul, he relied on his own wisdom, his own light, and saw Eliab as the perfect choice.

Eliab, a man who seemed to have all the qualifications for being a king. But God intervened, saying rather bluntly to Samuel: "Not as man sees does God see, because men see the appearance but the Lord looks into the heart."

In rapid succession, Jesse presented seven of his sons, but God rejected them all. Finally, when David was brought in from tending the flocks, God spoke, "There, that is he; anoint him!"

David did not look much like a royal person, but God had spoken. Obeying his spiritual light, Samuel anointed David as King. Did he have misgiving as he anointed David? Probably, but so what? Most of the time we, too, think we know the best way to get things done, and wish that God would just listen to us. How many times in our lives have we prayed for something and did not get it – but eventually realized that God did answer our prayer and he gave us something much better than that we had prayed for?

In his letter to the Ephesians, Saint Paul speaks from his own experience of moving from darkness to light. For him, thrown from a horse, the transformation came suddenly and dramatically. Even more so than David, he seemed a most unlikely choice to proclaim Jesus Christ. We know that he was initially mistrusted, avoided, and feared

■ See SPIRITUALLY page 15

• 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

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.

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Sky Valley, Georgia

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Church: 706-746-2999

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Wednesdays: 9 a.m. Healing and Prayer with Holy Communion each service

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

Christ Anglican Church

743-3319 or 460-7260

The Rev. Thomas Allen

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Worship and communion: Sundays at 4 p.m. at the Community Bible Church in Highlands.

Monday Bible Study: 6 p.m. Parish House

Tuesday Noon Bible Study: noon Parish House

Pot Luck Dinner: Last Sunday of the Month.

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

Sun: School – 9:30 & 9:45 a.m.; Worship – 8:30 & 11

Wed: Supper – 5:30 p.m.; Bible Study & activities – 6

Holy Family Lutheran Church – ELCA

Rev. Delmer Chilton, Pastor,

2152 Dillard Road – 526-9741

Wednesdays: Lenten Services at noon followed by a meal.

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

Wednesdays & Fridays: Mass – 9 a.m.

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

Sundays: Worship – 11 a.m.

Westside Baptist Church

Interim Pastor, Terry Dixon

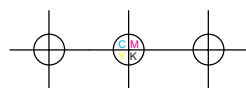
Services in the basement of the Peggy Crosby

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

by the early Christians. After all, he was, among many not so nice things, a murderer – he was the one who threw the first rock at Saint Stephen, the Christian Church's first martyr.

Come to think of it, King David was not always a nice person either – he was an adulterer and murderer. God really does choose the most sinful to represent Him among people. That is

Passing on a time-honored craft



Photo by Kim Lewicki

Highlands Needlepoint Society worked with The Girls' Clubhouse for three weeks, teaching them needlepoint basics by working on a Christmas Tree ornament. Shown here are members of the club with various stages of their project completed. From left are Julie Wiese, Doris Long, Sarah Power, Amy Fogel, Courtney Rogers, Stephanie Puchacz, Elizabeth Gordon, Paige Baty and Leslie Lewis.

Bake sales raise money for causes



Submitted photo

Sonjia Stewart (center) visited the Highlands Community Child Development Center (HCCDC) and presented a check from the Highlands Chapter No. 284, Order of the Eastern Star, to HCCDC Board Members Bob Wright (left) and Frances Oakley, holding one of the children of the HCCDC. Sonjia is the Worthy Matron 2004/2005 of Highlands Chapter No. 284, Order of the Eastern Star, and reports that in their fiscal year this chapter supported the Worthy Grand Matron's "Year of this Child" project in the order of the Eastern Star by making a donation to the Town of Highlands Scholarship Fund and sponsored a student at the Highlands School to attend the Presidential Inauguration.

light out of darkness!

Not as man sees does God see, because men see the appearance but the Lord looks into the heart." We would certainly do well to remember that. Another way to say it is: "What you see in NOT what you get!" And that is true of each and every one of us. Some of us are secret saints and others of us are secret devils – and it has always been that way and always will be that way! If you are the secret devil, please, for the love of God, change before you die!

Paul, himself, did not know what was in his own heart. But God certainly did – and God called him out of the darkness into light. Surely Paul can speak of the spectacular miracle recorded in the gospel as Christ gave light where there had been only darkness, for Paul himself had been given sight. Never before had a person born blind been given sight.

In the Old Testament, there is one example of sight given to a blind person. The Archangel, Raphael, was sent by God to restore sight to Tobit. Tobit though, was 62 years old when struck by blindness; his cure was a dim forecast of this miracle we read about today when the light of the world would give sight to one born blind.

We can see a perfect example of the literary conceit called the "chiaroscuro" effect – an Italian word which means light-dark. There are two distinct veins in John's account of the blind man – one of light and one of darkness. The man born blind is brought from darkness to light. The Pharisees, on the other hand, who thought they saw all too clearly, descended into deeper darkness, for they would not see!

The most stubborn Pharisees led the once-blind man to reach the dazzling light of revelation; he came to know who the man Jesus really was;

Sheriff not handling stray calls, yet

By Kim Lewicki

Since 1994 Macon County Sheriff Dept. has employed an animal control officer. People called Officer John Hook to attend to stray dogs and cats, rabid raccoons even wandering emus.

But no more.

"We have no place take animals," said Sheriff Robbie Holland.

At the March 7 Macon County Commissioners meeting, the board decided that until it has ironed out contractual agreements with the Macon

the one who said, "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Follow this progression carefully. To his neighbors, who asked the identity of the one who cured him, he simply responded "the man called Jesus." The light of truth was just beginning to dawn. Later, when questioned by the Pharisees, he declared, "He is a prophet!" Light is increasing!

The Pharisees had him tell his story again, trying to trick him, to prove that there had been no miracle, declaring that Jesus could not be from God. It mattered not what the man said; he would not be believed. Still, he boldly proclaimed that if Jesus were not from God, his eyes would not have been opened.

Being upbraided by a nobody did not sit well with the proud Pharisees; they threw him out of the temple and so descended more deeply still into self-imposed darkness.

Learning of this, Jesus sought the man he had cured, and gently asked if he believed in the Son of Man. With its response, faith reached its fullness, as he declared his belief that Jesus was indeed the Son of Man and then, he worshipped Jesus!

His journey from darkness to light was rapid – ours is more gradual. Ours begins at baptism, dramatically foretold by the blind man washing in the pool of Siloam. Sight was restored only after his immersion in the healing waters. Our journey from darkness to light, begun at baptism, continues each time we respond to the light of God's grace.

It will end for us only when we see Jesus face to face – he who is light form all light – the savior of the world.

Truly, it is all about light. The light of the world, Jesus Christ now reflected in every one of his followers. For you and me. What a challenge!

County Humane Society and Macon County Friends of Animals, the Sheriff's Dept. will no longer employ an "animal control officer," instead any officer can respond. But only if the board can enlist the help of a veterinarian with cages to house strays.

Until a vet is found, calls about strays will go unanswered at the Sheriff's Dept. Once found, only calls pertaining to domesticated dogs and cats will be handled.

• HIGHLANDS UPCOMING EVENTS •

On-going

- At Highlands Wine & Cheese at the Falls on Main, free wine flights Friday & Saturday from 4:30-6:30 p.m.

- "Evenings of Entertainment" Friday nights at Instant Theatre Company in Oak Square on Main Street. Tickets are \$15 with reservations and \$20 at the door. Doors open at 7:45 p.m. Show starts promptly at 8 p.m. No entry after show begins. Call for reservations. 342-9197.

- The Instant Theatre Company presents free Improvisation classes for adults Wednesday evenings February through May, 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the ITC's Studio on Main at 310 Oak Square. Auditions for musicians and singers are held 7:30-8 p.m. also on Wednesdays. Call 526-1687.

- Pilates classes are Tuesdays & Thursdays at 5:15 p.m. at the Rec Park. The cost is \$8 per class. 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. Tuesdays at the gallery. 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.

- Mountainview 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.

March 9 & 10

- Highlands School students in grades K-8 are supporting the American Heart Association by collecting sponsorships for jumping rope and playing basketball. Jump Rope for Heart (K-5) and Hoops for Heart (6-8) will help the A.H.A. fund research and provide grants to find cures for heart diseases.

March 10 & 12

- Beekeeping School for Beginners will be held two days - Thursday from 7-9 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at the N.C. Extension Office in Franklin. To register, call at 526-2385.

March 10 & 11

- Highlands School will dismiss at 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 10 for staff development. There will be no school on Friday, March 11 for a teacher workday.

March 12-13

- HCP presents "Stepping Out" at PAC. Call 526-8084 for tickets and info.

March 12

- The 2005 X-Tour (alternative/punk concert) featuring Falling Up, Hawk Nelson, Seventh Day Slumber at 7 p.m. (doors open at 6) at Highlands Rec. Park. You Could Win...I-POD mini, FLIP Skateboard. \$5 at the door. Call 526-4685 for information.

- "Let's Talk About It" Substance Abuse Forum, 6:30 p.m. at Tartan Hall in Presby-

terian Church in Franklin. For more information call 349-2426.

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a 4-mile moderate hike to the Devil's Courthouse on Whiteside Mountain. Some steep rocky terrain is involved. Meet at the Highlands Bank of America at 9:30 a.m. or at Whiteside Mt. parking area at 9:45 a.m. Bring a drink, lunch, and wear sturdy shoes. Reservations are required. Call leader Jim Whitehurst at 526-8134.

March 13-18

- Roots of the Appalachians - The People and the Culture - at The Mountain Retreat & Learning Centers and Elderhostel International in Highlands. To register call 877-426-8056 or register online at www.elderhostel.org. A special commuter rate is being offered by The Mountain for local residents which includes the program, field trip and 8 meals. To register as a commuter contact the Mountain at 828-526-5838 ext. 203.

March 15

- The "High Mountain Squares" will squaredance Tuesday from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at the Macon Middle School on Wells Grove Rd., Franklin. Marty Northrup from Columbus, NC will call Mainstream & Plus & cue lines. Come join us for an evening of good, clean fun. Info: 828-349-0905, 524-9366, 706-782-9846

March 17

- InterChurch Pot Luck Supper at Community Bible Church at 6 p.m. For more info, call Pat Griffin at 526-2418. Wear GREEN!

- Chili Dinner at 5 p.m., PTO at 6 p.m., followed by Book Fair at Highlands School.

March 19

- A car show fundraiser for Macon County Senior Games Saturday, 10 am to 2 pm at the Whistle Stop Mall parking lot on the Georgia Road (U.S. 441 South), Franklin. Registration fee for cars to be displayed is \$10 per vehicle and will be accepted from 10 am to 1 pm the day of the show. Trophies will be awarded to the top 20 cars and a Best of Show trophy also will be presented. Admission is free.

March 21

- Shroud of Turin presentation. When Jesus was lowered from the cross and taken to a burial cave, his body was wrapped in cloth. A burial shroud kept in Turin, Italy may be that cloth. It may also have been the Last Supper tablecloth. Attend the lecture, and you be the judge. Monday at 7 p.m. Highlands United Methodist Church, presented by Carlton Joyce - a member of an investigative, spectroscopic, analytical team. A nursery will be provided.

- Mirror Lake Improvement Assoc. regular meeting, 7:30 p.m. at Civic Center.

March 24

- At OEI - March Wine Dinner Thursday, March 24, featuring Domaine Serene Vineyards & Winery, Northern Willamette Valley Oregon. Dinners feature

a 6 p.m. reception followed by 6:30 p.m. Dinner at The Farm. Cost per person for the Dinner is \$125. Please call 828-526-8008.

March 26

- Saturday at 10:30 am. Family Easter Celebration for the entire community. Huge Easter Egg Hunt with special prizes. Watch an Easter video and enjoy lunch. Bring your family and friends. Held at Community Bible Church.

- Easter Egg Hunt at Highlands Rec Park at 10 a.m.

- Mirror Lake Litter Pick-up at 9 a.m. Meet at Thorn Park.

March 28

- Macon County School Board meeting held at Highlands School library at 6 p.m. Commissioners are hoping for a good turnout from the community.

April 2

- The annual Senior Games spring flea market is Saturday, 8 a.m.-2 p.m. in the County Community Building gym, 1288 Georgia Road, Franklin. Sale booths rent for \$20 each. Refreshments will be available for sale. For more information call Senior Games Coordinator Teresa Holbrooks at (828) 349-2090.

April 5-7

- NC Competency Test for highschoolers at Highlands School.

April 11

- Adult softball organization meeting 6 p.m. at the Rec. Park.

April 15-17

- At OEI - Burgundy Wine Weekend at The Old Edwards Inn and Spa Friday, April 15 - Sunday, April 17. For additional information or to make reservations, please call 828-526-8008.

April 19-20

- High School Comprehensive Test for 10th Grade.

May 3-5

- Last Month Competency Test for Seniors only.

May 19

- InterChurch Pot Luck Supper at Our Lady of the Mountains Church at 6 p.m. For more info, call Pat Griffin at 526-2418.

June 18

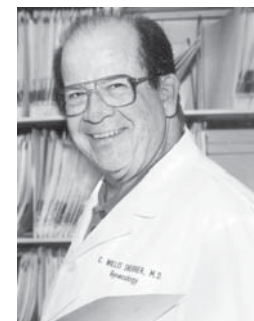
- Zonta Club of Franklin presents an evening of wine and chocolate, live and silent auction and a band, 7 p.m. at Whistle Stop Mall. Tickets are \$25 each and all proceeds charity. For more info call Linda McCall at 787-1708.

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TION** – Sat. & Sun. 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Call 828-526-4161.

**HOUSEKEEPER AT HIGH-
LANDS-CASHIERS HOSPITAL AND**

... MACON BANK continued from page 5

The park will have five stone step areas for people who prefer steps for seating and the gazebo will be spiffed up with a better foundation perhaps with rock veneer, if allowed, said Ross.

An evergreen screen will camouflage the parking lot and drive-through facility of the bank from the amphitheater.

"It is a parklike setting now, and we want to maintain that, so the landscaping will also reflect that atmosphere,"

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BY OWNER

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Ross said.

The lighting will be subdued ground lighting that will fit into the shrubbery and the grass.

"We're considering lighting along Carolina Way and Pine Street but that hasn't been discussed yet," Ross said.

The park could accommodate upwards of 1,000 people depending on whether people spread out or just stand around, said Ross.

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

The following are the Highlands Police Department log entries for the week of March 2-9. The only names printed are of public officials and/or people who were arrested.

March 2

- At 11 a.m., officers responded to a 9-1-1 hang-up from Old Edwards Inn. It was unfounded.

March 3

- At 2 p.m., a motorist at N.C. 106 and Helen's Barn Ave. was cited for driving without at license.

March 4

- At 11 a.m., a person attempting to cash a forged check at Farmer's Market was turned into the police.

- At 2:50 p.m., a possible breaking and entering with larceny was reported at a home on Cobb Road. Damage was estimated at \$400.

- At 4:10 p.m., a local restaurant called police to report a person communicating threats.

March 5

- At 2:45 p.m., police responded to a call of a domestic dispute on Main Street. It was unfounded.

March 8

- At 6:30 a.m., officers responded to an alarm at the Computer Man in Highlands Plaza. All was secure.

- At 8:30 p.m., officers responded to a two-car accident on N. 4th Street. There were no injuries.

The following are the Highlands

Fire & Rescue Department log entries for the week of March 2-9

March 2

- The dept. responded to a possible structure fire at a residence on Crystal Drive. It was out upon arrival.

- The dept. provided mutual aid to Cashiers Fire Dept. for a structure fire.

- The dept. responded to a possible brush fire on N. Big Bear Pen Road. It was a controlled burn.

March 3

- The dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Cullasaja Club Drive. It was false.

March 4

- The dept. responded to a fire in a construction equipment at a site on Short Off Road. The equipment was destroyed.

- The dept. responded to a two-car accident on Buck Creek Road and U.S. 64 east. There were injuries.

- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Memorial Park Drive. There was no transport.

March 6

- The dept. responded to a car on fire at Highlands School but it was just smoke caused from oil on the engine block.

- The dept. responded to fire alarm at a residence on Spring Street. It was a false alarm.

... REALITY CHECK continued from page 8

there and doesn't understand why he can't touch me," she said, tears welling up in her eyes. "I just hope that after seeing what it's done to me he won't touch drugs."

Erin is a trustee with the MCDOC and because of that she receives certain privileges, like the ability to share her story to students around the county.

Holland stressed to the students that if they are ever in any trouble to call 911 and get help from a police officer.

"I promise that I will find someone to come and get you," Holland said.

School Resource Officer Greg Rogers said that it's much easier to take a child home than it is to jail or the hospital or even worse, the morgue.

Holland asked the sixth-graders how many knew of other students

who had brought drugs to school and over half raised their hands.

"Part of the reason why they're (the inmates) here is to show you what drugs did to them," Holland said. "If you know of someone that is bringing drugs to school you should tell an adult because you might be saving someone's life."

Highlands School Principal Monica Bomengen said that students could email or send anonymous notes to her and that their identity would always be protected.

She recounted several instances where she "busted" students for drugs at her former school in Connecticut and was even subpoenaed to testify and she didn't reveal her student sources.

Holland said that as long as he's sheriff this program will be in place for the students and the community.



State committed to improving first part of Bowery Road

By Kim Lewicki

Even though the state has set a moratorium on new road construction, DOT has promised to improve the first part of Bowery Road this year.

Now, all the town has to decide is exactly how it wants the road to look.

Last week a committee made up of commissioners and property owners walked the first seven-tenths of Bow-

ery to come up with a design plan.

"We want to preserve as much vegetation as possible," said Commissioner Hank Ross. "We don't want any wholesale clearing and only want to take out what we absolutely have to."

To keep the rural look and feel of the road, commissioners would like an 18-ft wide road without asphalt curbs. The state's current design includes a 20-

foot-wide roadbed plus width for asphalt curbing.

"They say the curbs 'calm' traffic," said Mayor Buck Trott, "but we would like them to consider the road without curbs."

Commissioner Hank Ross said a road without curbs is not as "finished" looking. "The community wants to maintain the rural character," he said.

The committee would also like the state to consider alternative surface types – perhaps something other than asphalt. Commissioner Ross was asked to draft a letter to the state. The Town Board will finalize the letter at the March 16 board meeting.

Due to the state's funding shortfall this year, the back side of Bowery Road will be delayed for a year, said Trott.

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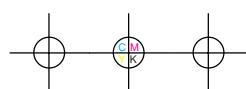
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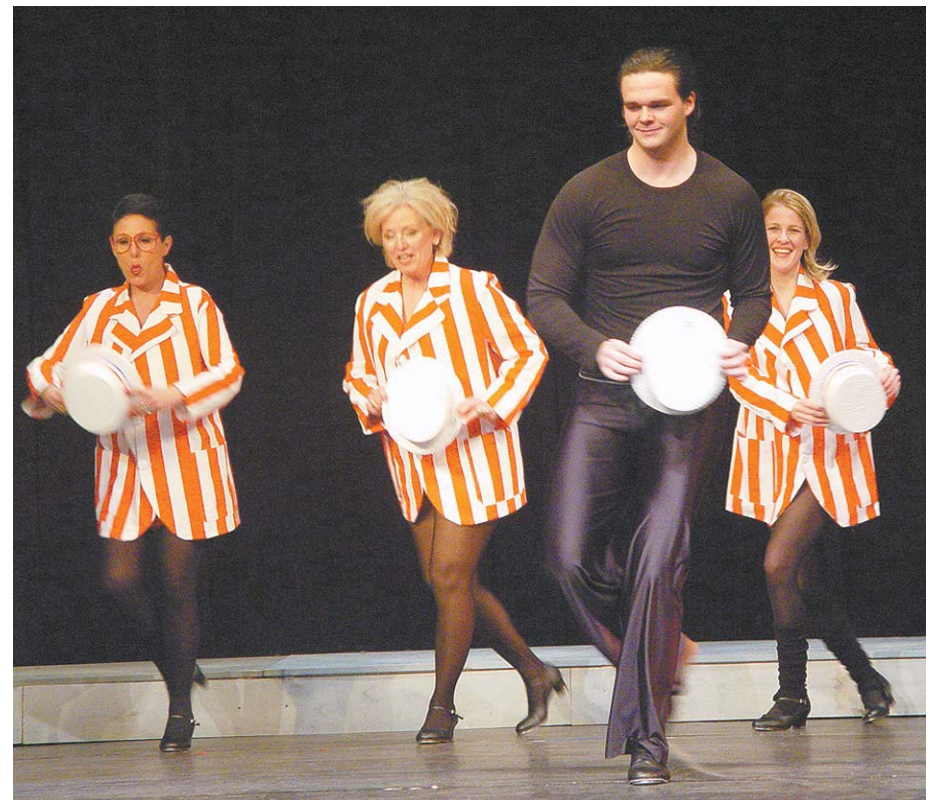
HS gymnast competes in Charleston, S.C.



Casey Jenkins takes 5th place on uneven parallel bars, 7th place balance beam, 7th place on vault, and 8th place all around at the Charleston Cup competition on Sunday, March 6, at the North Charleston Coliseum Convention Center in Charleston, SC.

Submitted photo

– A Review –



Performing the final routine in "Stepping Out" (from left) Ronnie Spilton, Mary Adair Leslie, Justin Taylor, and Caroline Wilder.

'Stepping Out' not just about dancing

By **Kim Lewicki**

If you're going to the Highlands Community Players production "Stepping Out" this weekend expecting Jennifer Lopez and Richard Gere in a version of "Shall We Dance," don't go.

But if you want to see your friends, neighbors and co-workers putting it all on the line just to give you a night out in Highlands...then go. The banter and the myriad of personalities is endearing, funny and even thought-provoking.

In all the pre-show PR, much was made of the dancing, but the show is not really about dancing and that's an important fact to remember.

It's about a bunch of ladies – young and older – each with a secret most would prefer not to tell. But by the end of the show, just about everyone has opened up and that's what endears you to the characters – that's what makes them real.

Misty Thomas steals the show as Mavis the dance instructor who has resigned herself to the fact that she's never going to make it big.

She, Ronnie Spilton as Maxine and choreographer Mary Adair Leslie as Vera have dancing in their pasts and it shows.

The rest of the "girls" really do

work hard trying to dance, you can feel it. But they're not dancing to impress, they're dancing to lose themselves, to forget the ups and downs of their everyday lives so perfection isn't key.

Anyone who knows Catlin Huitt knows her character of Sylvia is just an older, perhaps bawdier version of herself. She was clearly comfortable in her character's tap shoes.

Bonnie Earman as Rose is colorful, from her head to her toes; Sue Feldkamp as Mrs. Fraser plays a very annoying mother-substitute to Mavis; Carolina Wilder as Nurse Lynne, Nancy Reeder as gun-shy Andy, who clearly has a thing for Justin Taylor as Geoffrey, all do a great job bouncing off and dancing around each other both physically and emotionally.

The Highlands Community Players continues with two more performances of "Stepping Out," Saturday, March 12, at 8 p.m. and Sunday, March 13, at 2:30 p.m., in the Martin-Lipscomb Performing Arts Center in Highlands.

For tickets, call 828-526-8084, or stop by the box office on Chestnut Street, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., through Saturday.

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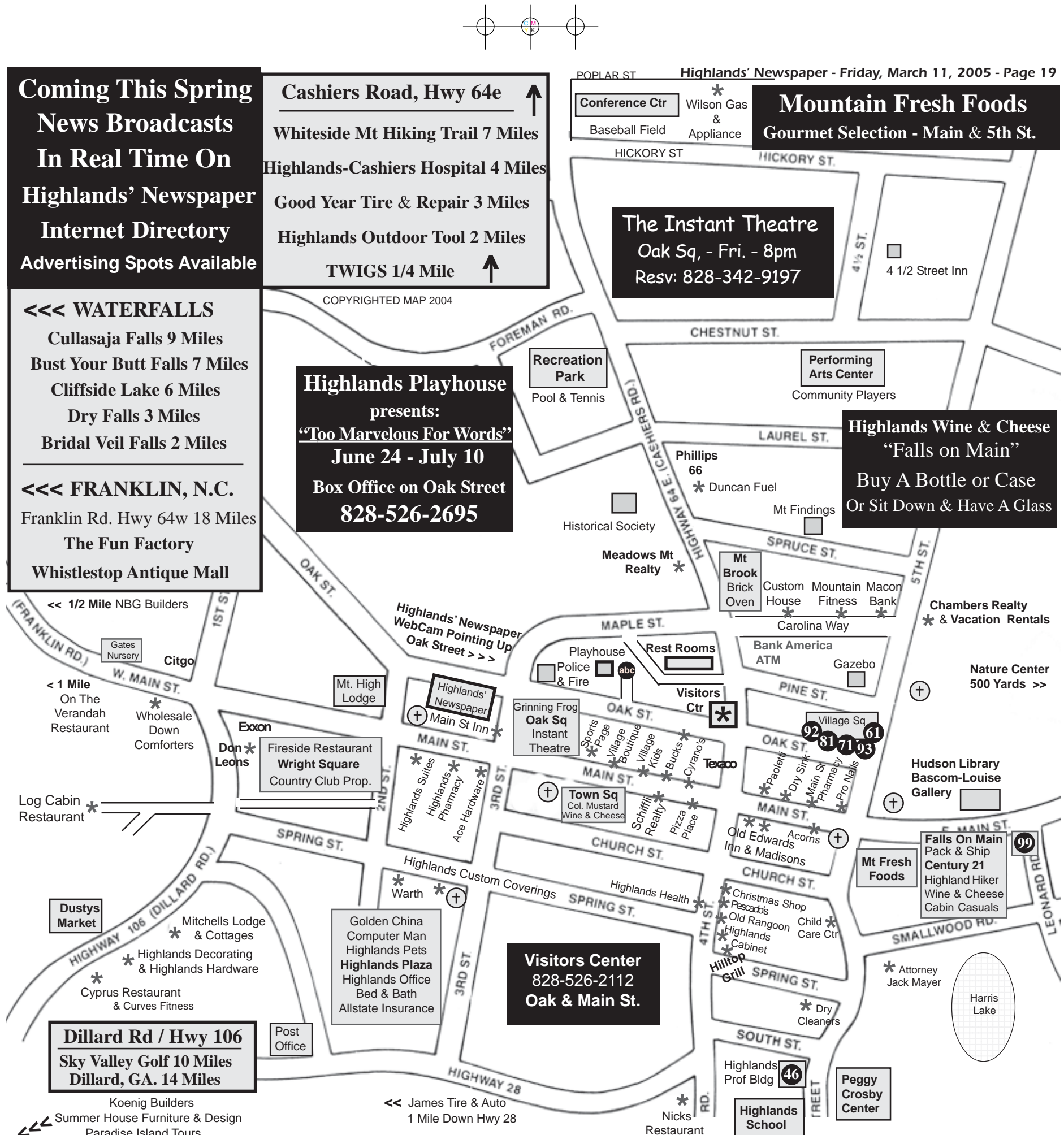
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