The week of July 18-24

- "A Walk in the Park," co-sponsored by the Highlands' Historical Society and the Highlands Community Players is set for Friday and Saturday, July 18-19 from 6 to 8 p.m. and Sunday, July 20, from 2 to 4 p.m. Shuttles leave from the Conference Center. Tickets are $10 and available at Cyranos and D&J Express Mart.
- Tickets are on sale for Highlands Playhouse summer season. Currently playing is Hay Fever, July 17-27. Tickets are $20 for adults and $9 for children. Performances are Tuesday through Saturday at 8 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m. For more information, call 526-2695.
- Kirkin' O' The Tartan at the First Presbyterian Church, July 20 at 11 a.m.
- Wolfgang's on Main and Summit One Gallery present an evening of fine art, wine and dining, Monday, July 21, featuring art from Vicki Ferguson, wines by Mondavi and food by Wolfgang. For more info call 526-3807.
- The Highland Hiker offer a half-day hike with wildlife biologist Liz Dominique hikes from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on July 19.
- Highlands-Cashiers Hospice conducts The Circle of Life Support Group every Friday, 10 a.m. until noon at the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital Conference Room. For more information, call Susan Silverthorn at 526-1462.
- Madeline Epp is teaching a watercolor workshop every Thursday from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Rec Park through August. For more information, call 369-6051.
- HealthTracks at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital offers weekly yoga classes every Tuesday from 5-6 p.m. The cost is $5. For more info, call Bonnie Powell at 526-1469.

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Cooking pg. 6
Movie Review pg. 10

News:

‘Cable Group’ franchise in jeopardy

Kim Lewicki

Recent actions by Highlands Cable Group have risked the company’s construction franchise extension OK’d by the Town Board at the July 2 meeting.

At the July 16 Town Board meeting, Town Administrator Richard Betz distributed two letters he sent to Nin Bond, owner of Highlands Cable Group.

In a letter dated July 8, Bond was told to stop attaching equipment to Town poles until the conditions outlined by the Town Board and the requirements of the Cable Television Ordinance and Franchise Agreement were met.

See FRANCHISE page 15

Town eyes water use and flow

By Kim Lewicki

There are some things most of us just don’t think about – the color of water, the components of water, the amount of water flowing through the town’s treatment plants.

But those are the kinds of statistics Highlands’ Town Engineer Lamar Nix watches carefully.

Of late he’s concerned with two things. The turbidity in Big Creek – Highlands’ primary drinking water source – and the number of gallons of sewage being treated at the wastewater treatment plant.

The turbidity is the amount of suspended particles in the water – soil mostly.

“Anyone can see it, just look at the lakes after a storm or this time of year when water from the bottom of the lake works its way to the top,” said Nix.

But the reason it’s more prevalent this year than last is what concerns Nix.

See WATER page 15

Peace permeates Horse Cove

Joel B. Walden recounts summer days as a youth at family’s homestead in Horse Cove. See story page 8.

MC Health Dept. finds new home in Highlands

Kim Lewicki

The bad news is the Macon County Health Department is no longer working out of the Peggy Crosby Center. The good news is very soon county offices will be housed in the county building on Buck Creek Road.

“For years people have been asking for county offices up here, and now that the county owns a building here, we might as well use it,” said Macon County Commissioner, Allen "Ricky" Bryson. Until the basement of the building on the site is finished, Women’s Infant and Children’s

See HEALTH DEPT. page 4
Dear Editor,

We, the merchants and property owners in the Highlands Historic Merchants district, welcome Highlands’ Newspaper to the community. It will be refreshing to know we have an independent, unbiased newspaper in town.

Let us all support it.

Earl Young, Highlands

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**FORUM**

Welcome to the first edition of Highlands’ only locally owned and operated weekly newspaper.

Highlands’ Newspaper is a newspaper about Highlands for Highlanders and all her visitors and residents – the day-trippers, overnighters, vacation renters, year-rounders or seasonal residents.

It is my hope that Highlands’ Newspaper will bring to Highlands what it’s been lacking, the benefit of a hometown newspaper whose interests, financial and otherwise, reside in Highlands.

My family and I live here in Highlands on Oak Street year-round and have lived here for six years. Our kids attend Highlands School, we are members of Highlands United Methodist Church and truly feel lucky to be able to not just call Highlands home, but feel “at home” here.

What you will see within the pages of Vol. 1 No. 1 is a sampling of what is to come. There are lots of exciting and interesting features and columns in the pipeline – just not enough hours in the day or days in the week this first time around!

Our printer – The Asheville-Citizen Times – requested the paper days earlier than expected in case there were bugs to work out. Though production time was cut short, know this is the first of what promises to be an exciting publication.

Our production manager is Darlene (Nugent) Melcher, a talented and artistic Highlands School graduate who was awarded a full scholarship to WCU. She also attended Asbury College in Kentucky. In charge of advertising is Carol Werner whose energy and enthusiasm are endless.

Highlands’ Newspaper is free and 5,000 copies will be available all over town and down the mountain every Friday here on out.

We will continue to post the breaking news as it happens on our Internet site – www.highlandsnewspaper.com – so whether here or away our readers can stay in touch.

I am currently accepting email submissions at editor@highlandsnewspaper.com. I look forward to hearing from you, working with you and enjoying a mutually satisfying long-term relationship.

– Kim Lewicki, Publisher/Editor

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**Letter to the Editor**

**Change is good**

Dear Editor,

We, the merchants and property owners in the Highlands Historic Merchants district, welcome Highlands’ Newspaper to the community. It will be refreshing to know we have an independent, unbiased newspaper in town.

Let us all support it.

Earl Young, Highlands

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We welcome letters from our readers. All letters are subject to editing. We reserve the right to reject letters. Anonymous letters will not be accepted. Letters bearing identification can arrive by post or email. Published letters do not necessarily represent opinions of Highlands’ Newspaper.
In her 98 years, she’s seen it all

Irene Picklesimer James turned 98 years old on June 12 – a milestone reached by few.

As the years have marched on, so has Irene with her loving extended family by her side.

Irene has never stopped smiling as she’s watched the world change around her. And she’ll tell you that’s the way to be with her telltale phrase, “Well now, that’s right.”

As a child she walked from the Picklesimer homestead down in Clear Creek up to town to go to school at the Highlands School behind Town Hall. She and her sister Almetta Brooks would start out before dawn, lantern in hand. When the sun rose, they’d hang it on a tree near the Harbison home on the Walhalla Road to be retrieved on the walk home.

She and Almetta used to walk to Cashiers by way of Rich Gap Road to visit their aunt who had married a Zachary.

She’s seen the Macon County School system evolve into what it is today – starting first as a student and then a teacher in the one-room schoolhouse where her mother taught before her.

Her husband died early on and she was left to raise her four children alone – Wilma Gordon, Tom and Herb James and Geri Crowe. Thanks to them she is surrounded with generations of offspring who are never far from her side.

Irene Picklesimer James epitomizes the “pioneer spirit” of the families – especially the women who have made Highlands what it is today. – Kim Lewicki
services (WIC) and the prenatal, women's and children’s clinical services will be handled at the Franklin facility on Emory Lake Road. “Unless we can find a temporary spot in Highlands,” said Ken Ring, MC Health Department director.

Through the WIC program, families who financially qualify get vouchers for various food items like baby formula and food, eggs, milk, juice, fortified cereals, beans, lentils and peanut butter. “They also receive nutritional counseling,” Ken Ring, MC Health Department director.

Though the particulars are still being worked out, in the approximately 1,800 sq. ft. in the concession building basement, commissioners are considering housing a building inspections office, a sheriff's office and the health department, said Bryson.

Ann Jones, director of the Peggy Crosby Center said the center is sorry to see the health department go because of the convenience the location provided residents but is glad the county has found a place in Highlands.

With fiscal cuts an issue in most county departments, Ring said the decision to move out of the Peggy Crosby Center was largely about funding. “The county is saving money and a county building will be utilized,” he said.

The Health Department’s lease at the Peggy Crosby Center ran out June 30. It hopes to be housed at the Buck Creek Sports Complex within a couple of months. “One good thing is we’ll have a lot more parking at the Buck Creek location,” said Ring.

Ring said about 17-30 people visited the department’s four-hour clinic each of the two Wednesdays a month it was at the Peggy Crosby Center.

Bryson said the county is working on finishing out the base-ment of the concession building as fast as it can.
Life Under Construction

Dealing with the ebb and flow of it all

By Dr. Maryellen Lipinski

I have come to believe that one never knows where life is going or how long it will last. Joseph Campbell said it best, "We must be ready to get rid of the life we’ve planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us.

Life is ongoing, always changing and fluid. Even the best laid plans need redesigning, restoring, reframing, renovating, and reconstructing.

This column will ask the following questions: Are you the architect of your future? Are you building the life you really want to live? Are you using quality materials? And finally, Are you at home in your life?

After visiting the Western North Carolina Mountains for 20 years, I finally moved here in March 2000, and decided to build my own home. Those of you who have done this, know what is involved when you design, plan and build your own home. The same is true about life.

My intent is to gently nudge you to stop and think for a moment about your life by sharing information about things that have happened in my life. It started when I decided to give myself a fiftieth birthday present.

Yep, you guessed it, a home in the mountains. What followed that decision and the seven months that it took to build my home, was an opportunity to examine my life.

Let me be frank. Sounds like a general contractor and looks like a general contractor. Hmm, I wonder?

From the very beginning of the process, I soon realized that the general contractor I hired was building his house and not my home.

So, I don’t get in BIG trouble after writing my first column, I want you to take note. What I am writing about is only my experience building my home. Just one person building one home.

All general contractors are not equal. Having said that, I will continue. After many meetings and long distant phone conversations I reached the acute awareness that the general contractor I hired was building his house and not my home. So, I did what any sane, single, almost 50-year-old woman would do when they had just moved across the country from California to North Carolina. I fired him.

Whether you are building your home or your life; it’s essential to surround yourself with supportive, knowledgeable, and skilled people.

Now the job of general contractor (GC) was all mine. I pulled my own building permit and grabbed my tools, which I might add, were a bit lacking. I was not the sharpest tool in the shed when it came to building my home, but that probably was not enough to stop me. I gave this decision some serious thought. Actually, I started by stopping and confronting some hard questions. Did I have the stamina and courage to do this or was I just being foolish? Despite my answer, I started building.

Basically, Life is Under Construction... A Work in Progress, which just happens to be the title of my second book.

What are you building in your life right now? Are you constructing the life you want? What do you say? Let’s start the building process!

Dr. Maryellen Lipinski is a psychologist by profession and an international professional speaker, author, Realtor and life coach by design. Contact her at www.maryellenlipinski.com

New ‘digs’ to greet students/faculty at Highlands School

It’s hard to believe school starts Aug. 7.

Area shops and restaurants won’t have the “all-day” help from students they’ve enjoyed since school got out the end of May.

Instead of fun in the sun, students will have to start thinking about things like World History and American Literature.

As always, new faces will greet students and faculty when they walk through those glass doors three weeks from now.

Noel McJunkin who taught U.S. History and ELP has taken a teaching job out west. Teacher Simeon Hickman from Cashiers moves into that slot.

Carol Bowren, from the Atlanta area takes over as Librarian at Highlands School, a post long held by Margaret Byson who has transferred to a school in Franklin.

Teacher couple, Carla and Terry Harris will teach Exceptional Children in the elementary and high school, respectively.

The search is on for a high school Chemistry and Physics teacher to replace Coach Richard who took a job at the Cullasaja Club Fitness Center.

Meanwhile, community members have spruced up the school.

Andrea Gabbard spearheaded a project involving Highlands United Methodist Church and Youth Challenge. They painted areas inside the school, mulched the playground and landscaped the flower bed in front.

With the budget crunch, Gabbard said the community’s help is really needed. Also new this year is a rock garden around the Highlands School sign on the front lawn, thanks to John Beck.
Vidalia Onion Pie
from Marilyn Christoffersen

1 baked pie shell
3 tablespoons flour
3 cups thinly sliced Vidalia onions
1 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons melted butter
2 eggs, well beaten
½ cup milk
6 bacon slices, crisply fried and crumbled
1 ½ cups sour cream
½ cup toasted, slivered almonds

Sauté onion in butter until lightly browned and wilted. Spoon into pastry shell. Whip flour, salt, milk and ½ cup sour cream until blended. Whisk in the remaining 1 cup of sour cream and eggs until well blended. Pour the mixture over onions. Bake in preheated 325° oven about 30 minutes until firm. Garnish with bacon and almonds.

Serves 6.

Vidalia onions are plentiful and have a superb flavor - sweet with just the right “zing” for this pie.

This recipe is one of my favorites from the cookbook. I have used it for several “pot luck” dinners and always received compliments. Marilyn is a superb cook, as all of us who have been fortunate enough to sample her dishes know. So enjoy your cooking!

Each week recipes from various local cookbooks will be featured.
The good news.

The life of faith has to be worked out in a life of unpredictability.

God’s Spirit in the form of a dove cast Jesus out immediately after his baptism into the wrenching, unpredictable place where his faith was tested.

We tend to live under “healthy illusions” believing that one day our current crisis and situation will be over and life will be better. The truth is, after one crisis, another will come. Life is not easy. Is there a way we can find our hope not when the struggle is over, but in the midst of the struggle?

When have you tried to make for yourself a “predictable” life instead of embracing the unpredictable journey of faith that Jesus walked?

The church is called to fish in deeper waters which are unpredictable, but where there are fish. In church, pews are bolted down and pulpits, furniture is hard to move. So are hearts and minds.

Where has God challenged your notions of church and religion? How did you respond?

We need to always remember God’s passionate love for us as we deal with life’s self-destructive choices.

The voice of God (verse 10) proclaimed that God was well-pleased with Jesus. We need to know that God is well-pleased with us, or else we fail. Sin is self-hate.

Can you recall a poor choice you have made simply because you forgot how precious you were to God?

Simeon is saying: “God, this child is precious.”

Scripture: Mark 1:9-15

At the time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.” At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness.

Blue Valley Baptist Church
Rev. Oliver Rice, Pastor (706) 782-3965
Sunday Services: 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.
Wednesdays: Midday prayer service at 7 p.m.

Buck Creek Baptist Church
Pastor Randy Wilson, (828) 743-3379
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m.
First Saturday: Singing at 7:30 p.m.

Christian Science Services
On the corner of Spring and Third streets
526-2630
Sunday: Morning Service – 11 a.m.
Wednesday: Evening Service – 7 p.m.
Tuesday & Friday: Study room open 2-4 p.m.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
NC. 28 N. and Pine Ridge Rd., (828) 369-8329
Rae Cammack, Branch President, (828) 369-1627
Sundays: Worship – 10 a.m.; school & primary classes; 11 a.m.; Women’s & Men’s Org. – noon
Tuesdays: Women’s Org. – 6:30 p.m.; Library – 6-8
Wednesdays: Boy Scouts of America mtg. – 6:30 p.m.; Young women’s activities – 6:30 p.m.

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

Community Bible Church
(Evangelical Presbyterian Church)
Steven E. Routhouse, Pastor, 526-4685
3645 U.S. 64 east
Sundays: School – 9:30 a.m.; Worship – 10:45 a.m.
Tuesdays: Women’s Bible Study – 9:45 a.m.
Wednesdays: Supper – 5:30 p.m.; Bible Study – 6:30 p.m.
Thursdays: Youth Mtg. – 6:30 p.m.

Episcopal Church of the Incarnation
Rev. R. Michael Jones, D. Min., Rector: 526-2968
Communion: Sundays; Holy Eucharist – 8 a.m.; 9 a.m. & 11 a.m.; Adult Eucharist – 10 a.m.; Children’s Eucharist – 11 a.m.
Sundays: Sunday School and Congregational Prayer (9:30 a.m.); Confirmation Class (10 a.m.); Preschool Class (11 a.m.); Choir (6 p.m.); Women’s Group (6:30 p.m.)

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in Satolah
Pastor Rusty Wolfrey, (706) 782-8130
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m.; Choir – 6 p.m.
Wednesdays: Bible Study and Youth Mtg. – 7 p.m.

Mountain Synagogue
St. Cyprian’s Episcopal Church, Franklin; 369-6871
For more information, call (706-745-1842, (706) 754-3344 or (828) 293-5197

Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church
Pastor Rev. William M. Evans, Pastor
Parish office, 526-2418
Sundays: Mass – 9 a.m.
Sundays: Mass – 9 a.m.

Scaly Mountain Baptist Church
Pastor Mark Mont, (828) 743-3379
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m. & 7 p.m.
Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg. – 7 p.m.

Scaly Mountain Church of God
Pastor Alen Metton
Sundays: Radio Program 1340 AM – 8:30 a.m.; School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m.; Evening – 6 p.m.

Shortoff Baptist Church
Pastor Rev. Baker Crane
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m.; Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study – 7 p.m.

The Church in the Wildwood
Horse Cove Road
Old-fashioned hymn-singing led by laypeople.
Every Sunday Memorial Day – Labor Day at 7 p.m.

Westside Baptist Church
Interim Pastor, Terry Dixon
Saturdays: Services in the basement of the Peggy Crosby Church – 11 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m.

Whiteside Presbyterian Church in America
Cashiers, Rev. Sam Forester, 743-2122
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m.

Each week men and women of the cloth will feature spiritual food for thought.
Coming Home to ‘The Cove’

Joel B. Walden
Contributor

Throughout the year and through all time, The Cove emits an endless sense of tranquility.

Waking up to the sound of my grandmother churning butter in the kitchen. Wondering when we were going to see the sun after days of drizzling fog. Listening to everyone tell stories of the "old days" as they sat around the supper table. Noting the elation of my mother at finding a jigsaw puzzle piece she’d been looking for since before breakfast that morning. Boring, boring, boring! I can still remember the big rock that sat in the window of the gem shop “up town.” It was huge and had purple crystals inside of it. Someone had cut a big hole in the side of it so we were headed back down the mountain to the Cove.

In the evenings, after supper, we would run around and catch lightning bugs or go worm hunting. Catching lightning bugs was fun for about an hour – after that it became just another entry into the list of boring things to do.

Now, nightcrawler hunting was different. We got an old squirt bottle and filled it with a little dry mustard and some water, shook it up real good and then went looking for nightcrawler holes.

When we found one, we squirted the mixture into the hole and out they’d come. My Uncle Cecil taught us that trick and we had a blast with that one.

After I got a little older and had my driver’s license we would go here and there to sightsee. I remember the titillating feeling as I drove up from Franklin to Highlands with nothing but a two-foot concrete barrier between the road and the Gorge. Scary stuff at 17 when the only hill you’d driven was an overpass on the Interstate. On weekends in the Cove we’d listen to the weekly obituaries and listen to it squeal the entire way to Elberton, Ga., to pick up A trip to Elberton, Ga., to pick up a dog – Shep number three after Shep number two passed away.

Now, there was some relief to the boredom of being stuck in the house.

At the sound of an approaching vehicle we would run to the living room window in heightened anxiety. More times than not, however, it was a car traveling down Walking Stick or Rich Gap roads. When a car did come, it meant a temporary relief from the boredom.

The boredom of being stuck in this God forsaken place with no friends and no entertainment. A place with the darkest nights on Earth and a place with tree frogs as loud as an AC/DC concert.

The highlights of the day were fish feeding time, watching the cows pass through the yard at four in the afternoon on their way to the barn from the pasture, and supper time.

Of course there was always the brief excursions to Highlands or Franklin to buy groceries or visit family.

Trips to Franklin to pick up a pig and listen to it squeal the entire way back to the Cove.

A trip to Elberton, Ga., to pick up a dog – Shep number three after Shep number two passed away.

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Trips to Franklin to pick up a pig and listen to it squeal the entire way back to the Cove.

A trip to Elberton, Ga., to pick up a dog – Shep number three after Shep number two passed away.
Youth travel to Highlands to make a difference

By Kim Lewicki  
Publisher/Editor

Changing the world one shingle at a time had a group of 24 volunteers working hard on Buttermilk Lane.

As a ministry of the North Carolina Missions Board with the Southern Baptist Convention, World Changers came to Highlands the week of June 23-27 and literally changed a couple’s life.

In one week’s time, the group transformed Roy and Mary Baty’s home from a building in bad need of repair to a home that can fend off whatever Mother Nature sends its way.

Baptist church youth groups from Virginia to Texas have come to Macon County with World Changers for the past three years, this time making a stop in Highlands.

The Baty family was selected as a recipient by Macon Program for Progress and as such got a new roof, new ceilings, a new floor in the bathroom and new windows which tilt inside for easy cleaning. As Betty Loper, a youth volunteer from Virginia, put it, “What we’re doing will keep them warm in the winter and keep the bugs and icky spiders out of their house.”

The renovation is valued at least $15,000, but donated and government-issued building materials coupled with almost 1,000 hours of volunteer manhours brought the project in for much less.

“This is a great way to love on people,” said Virginia volunteer, Carla Bragg.

Each of the 20 youth had to pay their own way to participate in the project, $150-$250, but they all said it’s worth it.

“It feels good to help other people and it’s good to be around friends,” said Ryan from Camden, S.C., who’s a first-timer with World Changers. “It’s been a lot of fun to help this group get this house rebuilt and to have the fellowship and worship.”

Jennifer Wilkins from Raleigh, N.C., is a seasoned World Changer. “It shows me different aspects of ministering to people. Not just talking, but showing that life is good,” she said. “Being able to help out in ways when people can’t help themselves.”

World Changers worked on three houses in Macon County using schools in Franklin as their base.

After working from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., the group headed down the mountain for dinner, fellowship and worship.

At night, they camped out on mattresses and sleeping bags but they didn’t seem to mind.

“This has been an amazing experience,” said Christy Fritz, from Virginia. “I’m thrilled to be able to help.”

She said the best part is Mary Baty. “When she comes along she just keeps smiling.”

HS Literary Magazine wins awards, again

It begins as soon as school starts up in the – well, summer now. This year, teachers go back Aug. 1. Students return Aug. 7.

Highlands School literature teacher Beverly Van Hook starts rallying English and creative writing teachers, the art teacher and students from every grade level – even teachers with a creative flair – to submit examples of their best creative endeavors to the school’s literary magazine – “Crossroads.”

Over the past several years, the magazine has won awards for excellence in various categories.

This summer, the magazine was recognized as a Magazine of Honor by the NC Scholastic Media Association Summer Institute at UNCG-Chapel Hill.

Highlands School students won two, third-place and three, honorable mentions in layout, photography, features, fictions and poetry.

Over the school year, students in the elementary school, middle school and high school submit everything from poems to novelettes; original works of art to photographs. Artwork is scanned and generally placed alongside written works with a similar theme. Artwork and written works typically complement each other perfectly.

The Literary Magazine class collects and edits all the material, selects the artwork, designs the magazine on PageMaker software and ultimately prints each copy.

The magazine costs $5 and proceeds finance the project. The “Crossroads” magazine is available at Highlands School.
Most everyone knows florists cut flower stems at an angle, but do you know why? There’s actually a scientific reason for it.

If you want a long vase-life out of your cut flowers, always cut the stems on an angle. Use a knife or clippers exclusively for flower and foliage stems. If you use all-around-the-house scissors or dull clippers they will crimp the membranes of the stem which means the flowers can’t “drink” the water.

Also, cutting stems of flowers and foliage on an angle, exposes more of the inner stem which means makes it easier for the flowers to drink.

Think about it. If you cut a stem straight across and place it in a vase of water, the end of the stem sits flat on the bottom of a vase. When it sits flat, the stem isn’t exposed to the water so it can’t “drink.”

Cutting stems at an angle prolongs the vase-life of your cut flower arrangement dramatically.

Florist Tips & Secrets

By Jan Burchett, Best of the Bunch

The art of stem-cutting

This 1994, PG-13, movie is one of the lesser-known Coen Brothers productions.

It is lighthearted fare from a writing team known for dark, dark, comedies. The actual storyline (good guy/bad buy corporate greed, improbable/inevitable love interest) is predictable, and the similarities to Frank Capra’s work have to be on purpose, but do not be deceived!

This is a real treasure, both for the stellar performances by Tim Robbins (goofy good guy trying to make it big in the big city), Jennifer Jason Leigh (hardened headstrong reporter) and Paul Newman (obviously having way too much fun as the evil CEO of Hudsucker Industries, with very big and very evil plans), and for the surreal quality of the cut-aways and the silly/clever humor this team is known for.

The basic story-line has the evil corporate board plucking the cheerful and clueless Tim Robbins from the mailroom and setting him up for failure, which, natch, does not happen.

The rest is detail, with terrific facial expressions, hidden references to many older films (including a lot of Capra), and some really cool cinematography.

Coen Brother fans, Tim Robbins fans, and fans of smart and strange movies will enjoy this film. Don’t let anyone tell you about Norville’s (Robbins) brilliant idea before you get a chance to see this one for yourself.

Other Coen Brothers films are "The Man Who Wasn’t There," "O’ Brother, Where Art Thou?," "Fargo," "Big Lebowski," "Barton Fink," "Blood Simple," "Miller’s Crossing" and my all time favorite, "Raising Arizona."

These and about 5,000 other titles are available at Movie Stop Video next to Brick Oven Pizza. Stop on in and give them a look.

New-release movies rent for $3.25, regular movies rent for $2. There’s also “Two for Tuesday,” excluding new releases, and “Five for Five” – 5 movies for 5 days for $7. Hours are Monday through Friday 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.; Sat. and Sun. noon-8:30 p.m.

Stuart Armor will be submitting movie “reviews” regularly.
Book Review

Zero: The Biography of a Dangerous Idea, by Charles Seife

By Katie Brugger

Have you ever named computer files with numbers? If you number files 1, 2, 3, the files are listed in proper numerical order until you get to 10. Then something funny happens. Ten is placed after 1 but before 2. Why? Because the computer is only looking at the first digit to rank the files. It can’t distinguish between the ones in the number 1 and the number 10.

What about the zero?

"Zero: The Biography of a Dangerous Idea," by Charles Seife, is a fascinating book on the history of zero. The book begins by exploring the beginnings of numerical symbols in the Middle East cultures of Greece, Egypt, and Babylonia a few hundred years before the beginning of the current era. Have you ever thought about how amazing the invention of a number system is, or a language? Learning how to express ideas in an abstract form that you can use to communicate to others?

The need for accurate counting and record keeping by trade and business people stimulated the development of number systems. The first systems started counting with the number 1. Who would start with zero? The natural place to start counting is with the number one. Would we say, "My child is zero years old"? Of course not. But how many years old is your baby for that year before his/her first birthday if it isn’t zero? But we don’t say that. We say he/she is six months. We don’t think in terms of zero. The Mayans did, though. They had a symbol for zero, and they counted 0, 1, 2 . . . . 19, where we would inaccurately count 1, 2, 3 . . . 20.

The history of zero (at least west of India, this book does not cover China) begins in the Babylonian civilization concurrent with ancient Greece. The Babylonians discovered how to write numbers using a place system, and this necessitated a placekeeper meaning “naught.” For example, in the number 104 the zero can be thought of as “naught-tens” or “no-tens.” This system spread to India and in about 700 AD, because of Hinduism’s openness to the concept of “void,” the Indian mathematicians were able to take the idea one step further to invent the zero, the number of nothing, the opposite of infinity, an actual number 0.

I had always thought it was the Arabs who discovered zero, but they actually learned it from the Indians. It came to Europe from the Arabs, so that is why they have gotten the credit.

Without zero there can be no place system, which means numbers can’t be manipulated, thus without zero there can be no mathematics (other than geometry) and no science. Imagine trying to multiply numbers written in Roman numerals. For example, what is XLII x CXVII (42 x 126 = 5292) Due to the discovery of zero, mathematics and science flowered in India and in the Arab world in the years 700 A.D. to 1500, but this was not the case in Europe.

The first half of the book traces the resistance to the idea of zero from the early Greeks and Egyptians to Aristotelian-influenced Christianity. None of these cultures’ belief-systems could allow for the concept of the void, of nothingness. Christianity had absorbed

Only with the Renaissance did zero become accepted in Europe. With the Reformation came the loosening of strictures against free thought, and the European mind opened up to new ideas. With the introduction of zero began the advances in mathematics and science that have led to the technological civilization of today.

Zero is a latecomer to our culture and we have not completely integrated it into our cultural paradigm. We still treat it as if we could live without it, as if it were insignificant. It is our aversion to zero that got us into the argument over which was the first year of the millennium. The monk who decided on the exact year of Christ’s birth in order to set up a standardized calendar for the whole Christian world (in 527 A.D.) didn’t assign the first year the number 0. He, naturally, called it year one — 1 A.D. What is the year before 1 A.D? It is 1 B.C. There is no year 0. The calendar system began with the year 1, and therefore the first year of the new millennium was 2001.

Look at a computer keyboard. Zero is not in its proper place. It is not before 1 where it belongs; it is dangling up above 9. Look at a telephone. Zero is stuck below the three by three keypad of numbers in a limbo symbol-land of asterisk and pound sign.

The author goes on to trace the development of science, using zero as the focal point, up to modern-day quantum physics. Quantum physics gives an understanding of zero analogous to white light. As white light contains all colors, zero contains all within in it. There is no such thing as nothing. Vacuum is not nothing; it is everything. The discussion of vacuum begins with this quote: "To physicists, vacuum has all particles and forces latent in it. It’s a far richer substance than the philosopher’s nothing." -- Sir Martin Rees.

An interesting side-point: The next time someone calls you a "zero" or you hear someone use zero as a pejorative term, you will know that person is ignorant of the true meaning of the word. Zero is an important number and is as big as infinity: To be zero is to be everything.

This is just the kind of book I love. It covers mathematics, history, philosophy, the history of science, and quantum physics. I highly recommend it and it’s available at the Hudson Library on Main Street call number SJ 3C.

Katie and her husband Arthur perform at Buck's Coffee Cafe featuring all kinds of music including songs they've written.
Back discomfort is a common problem. And frequently, the workplace can be the cause if one is not conscious of good posture and proper body alignment. Keeping your back free of pain may be as easy as proper posture and improved technique.

Body mechanics and upright posture eases stress and pressure on discs and also strain on muscles and ligaments of the spine. Siting for long periods can be a common cause of low back pain. Remember to use some means of orthopedic support such as a small pillow or rolled towel. More expensive types of devices are also available from health or medical supply stores. According to the American Council on Exercise, it is a good idea to remove the support every half-hour or so to give your back a change of position. They also suggest that the ear be in line with the shoulder and the jaw be parallel to the floor. Try to avoid a chin jutting, head forward posture.

Some small modifications to your sitting posture can be of great benefit. Remind yourself to sit up straight, facing directly forward rather than leaning to one side. Keep your chair close to your desk. Check the arm rests on chairs to be sure they allow such an adaptation. Adjust your chair to a height that will allow you to relax your shoulders while doing desk work. The back rest should be upright to encourage proper spinal alignment. Tilling the seat forward will help you avoid slouching. A chair that swivels is a good idea to minimize torque. Try to place frequently used items closer and when you bend forward, try bending from the hip instead of the waist.

Did you know that using your shoulder to help hold a telephone can cause neck strain? If you are a frequent phone user, check out the use of headsets or just make an effort to keep hands free for holding the phone.

Another tip for general back comfort is movement. If you sit for a long time, rise and walk a bit and/or try tilting your hips forward—gently—to relieve stress from a slouched position.

Don’t forget exercise. General strengthening of the truck and legs can be very beneficial. Stretching, flexibility and relaxation methods such as yoga or meditation can reduce tension in muscles. Remember to avoid exercises that are uncomfortable or cause undue stress on your back. Information on appropriate back exercises is available from a number of sources on-line or from your local library or bookstore. Consult your doctor for specific recommendations if you have an existing condition or have undiagnosed back pain. Exercise professionals are also a great source for general advice.

As always, it is the best idea to consult your physician prior to beginning any exercise program. Reference: American Council on Exercise, "Protecting Your Back at Work," February, 2003

Ginger and other fitness gurus on the plateau will be submitting columns weekly.
**Upcoming Events and Activities on the Plateau**

This weekend
- "A Walk in the Park," co-sponsored by the Highlands’ Historical Society and the Highlands Community Players is set for Friday and Saturday, July 18-19 from 6 to 8 p.m. and Sunday, July 20, from 2 to 4 p.m. Shuttles leave from the Conference Center; tickets are $8 and available at Cyranos’ and D&J Express Mart.
- Tickets are available for Highlands Playhouse summer season. Hay Fever, July 17–27, The 1940's Radio Hour, July 31-Aug. 17 and The Real Thing, Aug. 3-17 and The Great Storytelling Festival is Saturday, Aug. 2 at PAC. Tickets are $15 for adults and $5 for children. Tickets are available at Hudson Library, Regions Bank and Highlands Office Supply.
- The Highlands Playhouse Golf Tournament is Monday, Aug. 4 at Highlands Cove. Shotgun begins at noon. Application forms are available at the Playhouse. The cost is $125. Profits support the Playhouse. Dinner is included at Nick’s at the Cove.

**Weekly happenings**
- The Highland Hiker offers half-day hikes during the week with Mike Smith all summer long. Hikes are from 1 to 5 p.m. and cost $5 per person. Hikers leave from the Highland Hiker Church Street store. Bring a bag lunch and plan to hike July 29, Aug. 5, and Aug. 26. Wildlife biologist Liz Dominique hikes from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on July 19, Aug. 15 and Aug. 16.
- Highlands-Cashiers Hospice conducts The Circle of Life Support Group every Friday, 10 a.m. until noon at the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital Conference Room. For more information, call Susan Silverthorn at 526-1462.
- Madeline Epp is teaching a watercolor workshop every Thursday from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Rec Park. For more information, call 369-6051.
- The Highlnder Hiker offers fly-fishing lessons throughout the year. For more information, call 526-5298.

**Email events to:** editor@highlandsnewspaper.com

**Highlands Eateries & Light Fare**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hilltop Grill</th>
<th>526-5916</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fourth &amp; Spring “on the Hill”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“Where the locals eat”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hamburgers, fries, sandwiches &amp; salads</td>
<td>Mon.-Fri. 11 a.m to 3:30 p.m.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pescado’s</th>
<th>526-9313</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Street “on the Hill”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fresh Mexican</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“The fastest food in town”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lunch 7 days: 11-3; Dinner: Tues.-Sat. 5-8:30</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brick Oven Pizza</th>
<th>526-4121</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mtn. Brook Center next to Movie Stop Made-to-order pizza, calzones &amp; salads Open for lunch &amp; dinner year-round</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highland’s Hill Deli</th>
<th>526-9632</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Street across from Old Edwards Inn Made to order sandwiches, green &amp; fruit salads, ice cream</td>
<td>Open 7 days a week 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don Leon’s</th>
<th>526-1600</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dillard Road next to Farmer’s Market Cajun &amp; European specialties Sandwiches &amp; more</td>
<td>Tues. - Sun. 11 - 7</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dave’s Meats &amp; Seafood</th>
<th>526-5241</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dillard Rd. next to Farmer’s Mkt. Meats, Seafood &amp; Prepared Foods</td>
<td>Open 6 days, 8:30 a.m. - 7 p.m. Closed Sundays</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sports Page</th>
<th>526-3555</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Made-to-order specialty sandwiches &amp; salads, soups, &amp; desserts</td>
<td>Open for lunch Mon.-Sat. 11 - 4</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buck’s Coffee Cafe</th>
<th>526-0020</th>
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<tr>
<td>384 Main Street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee, grilled sandwiches, desserts &amp; wine Entertainment Thurs. - Sat.</td>
<td>Open 7:30 a.m. - 11 p.m., Tues. - Sat. Until 6 p.m., Sun. &amp; Mon.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Pizza Place</th>
<th>526-5660</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On Main Street</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pizza, specialty sandwiches &amp; salads Eat in or carry out</td>
<td>Open for lunch &amp; dinner</td>
</tr>
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Questions & Answers

In this weekly column area therapists will answer just about any question put to them. First up is Betty Holt. Holt, M.Ed., is a Licensed Professional Counselor and Life Coach in private practice in Highlands.

Question:
I feel so disconnected with the community around me. My husband and I are retired middle class people living on a fixed income. My daughter and her husband live in town with their two teenage sons. We see them occasionally during the week and for family suppers every couple of weeks, but I feel like I need more of a relationship. My husband and I feel very much alone. What should we do? – 83 year-old woman

Answer:
It sounds like you need to make some new connections with people in your community. The easiest way to meet people is to start with the things you are interested in. What have you enjoyed doing in the past? If you’ve enjoyed the theatre, maybe volunteering with the Playhouse would be an option you’d enjoy. Have you been a churchgoer in the past or would you like to investigate that now? Churches are usually full of meaningful projects and looking for people who have the time to help with them. Do you like children? Would you like to be a mentor or help a child learn to read? Both Big Brothers Big Sisters and the Literacy Council are two great organizations who need people willing to connect with children. Even though it’s sometimes difficult to reach out in a new community, you may have to take the first step. There are usually many opportunities to meet people through volunteering your time, and often just the act of helping gives people a real sense of connection and well-being. How about having a brunch in your neighborhood and meeting the neighbors you haven’t met yet? Or inviting a few people you have met and asking each of them to bring a friend? And last, but certainly not least, how about any of those talents or yearnings you had years ago and wanted to follow up with “if only you had the time”. Feeling disconnected is not always an outward thing – sometimes it has to do with our connection to ourselves. Perhaps there is a part of you that would like expression through something creative such as writing, painting, cooking, gardening – really anything that serves as an outlet for something that is uniquely you.

Email anonymous questions to editor@highlandsnewspaper.com. Include gender & age.

Highlands Service Directory

To advertise in Highlands’ Newspaper’s Service Directory Call 526-0782
FRANCHISE continued from page 1

The July 8 letter was sent when Town officials learned that shortly after the July 2 Town Board meeting, Bond attached cable to four Duke Power poles and one Town pole along Hicks Road.

In the second letter, dated July 14, Betz reiterates discussions Mayor Buck Trott, he and Bond had on July 11 concerning insurance documentation and alleged permission to attach to poles within the town limits.

In the July 11 meeting, Bond allegedly said Town Engineer Lamar Nix gave him permission to attach to Town poles. He also allegedly said he had instructed Wayah Insurance Group to forward documentation of adequate insurance coverage to the Town several years ago.

But at Wednesday's Town Board meeting, Nix said not only did he not give Bond permission, he said as Town Engineer he doesn't have the authority to give Bond permission to do anything.

"I've only met the man one time when he rode with me to show his concerns about pole violations in town. He said he planned to come into town on Hicks Road and to attach to Duke Power poles," said Nix.

Mid-June, Bond told commissioners he was ready to string cable in town but needed an extension to his construction franchise.

Commissioners OK'd the construction extension contingent upon several requirements including proof of insurance, proof of financial means to complete the project and submittal of a detailed make-ready plan – most of which they haven't received, said Betz.

The board took no action, but Acting Mayor Amy Patterson said it was apparent Bond strung cable while his franchise was in limbo. "He's risk- ing the town considering the agree- ment null and void," she said.

Betz wrote Bond that if the Town finds out he has attached any more equipment to Town poles without meeting the requirements outlined at the July 2 meeting, he'll recommend the franchise agreement be revoked.

WATER continued from page 1

"We thought it was because of construction activity near the creek upstream of the plant – maybe construction without erosion control devices," he said. "But we really haven't found a smoking gun."

What he did find were several small sites whose cumulative effect could be the cause of the turbidity. But nothing is conclusive, he said.

A rise in turbidity occurs every storm, Nix noted, and the turbidity has been moving. "It's consistent day after day."

Regardless, Nix said turbidity isn't affecting the water treatment plant's ability to perform. The permissible national turbidity unit count is 15-20 and if Big Creek's count gets anywhere near that Nix shuts the plant down until it clean up. "We don't have to shut it down, but we choose to so we don't have to discard our chemicals," he said.

Because of the rain, water consumption is down "a hair" from last summer despite the increase in people using the system this year, said Nix. "Sprinkler systems take up a lot of our water and they're just not being used this year."

Meanwhile, across the way, the wastewater treatment plant is churning away.

"We're treating a lot of sewage, a lot more than last year," said Nix. "Which means there are a lot more people using their facilities."

Police & Fire Report

The following are the Highlands Police Department log entries for the week of July 9-15. The only names are of public officials and/or people who were arrested.

July 9
• At 2 p.m., officers investigated an accident where a truck rolled down an embankment on Horse Cove Road when the shoulder gave way. There were no injuries.

July 10
• A little past midnight, officers responded to a complaint of noise from the apartments near Rib County on Spring Street. The residents were told to be quiet.
• At 9:02 a.m., officers responded to an alarm at a residence on Big Bearpen Road. All was secure.
• At 9:50 a.m., a driver was cited for driving with an expired registration sticker and expired inspection sticker at Spring Street and N.C. 106.
• At 5:42 p.m., officers responded to an alarm at Regions Bank. All was secure.

July 11
• At noon, the owner of C.K. Swan reported a shoplifting incident where a painting valued at $900 was reported missing.
• At 1:29 p.m., officers responded to an accident between two vehicles in Dusty's parking lot on N.C. 106. There were no injuries.
• At 5:03 p.m., officers removed a copperhead snake from Cosper's Flowers on N.C. 28.

July 12
• At 8:30 a.m., employees at 64 Stop and Shop reported a billfold left at the store. Police have returned it to the owner.
• At 9:02 a.m., officers responded to an alarm at Hudson Library. All was secure.
• At 4 p.m., officers responded to an accident between two vehicles on Main Street. There were no injuries.
• At 11:20 a.m., officers assisted a person locked in a store.
• At noon, a motorist on U.S. 64 and N.C. 106 was cited for driving with a false tag.

July 14
• At 7:15 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., officers responded to a domestic dispute between a mother and son at a residence on Wyanoak.
• At 5 p.m., officers responded to an accident on Horse Cove Road where the driver of a rented motor home hit the side of the mountain.
• At 5:30 p.m., officers responded to the Rec Park Pool where $80 was reported missing from the cash box.

July 15
• At 3:50 p.m., officers responded to a domestic dispute at a residence on Wyanoak Drive.
• At 4:15 p.m., a resident reported hearing gunshots fired.
• At 5:10 p.m., officers responded to an alarm at a construction site. All was secure.
• At 5:45 p.m., officers responded to a report of juveniles drinking at the Rec Park.

The following are the Highlands Fire & Rescue Department log entries for the week of July 9-15.

July 10
• The department was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at Chestnut Hill. The victim was transported to Highlands-Cashiers Hospital.

July 11
• The department responded to a motorcycle accident on Buck Creek Road. The victim was transported to Highlands-Cashiers Hospital.

July 12
• The department responded to an accident on Horse Cove Road. There were no injuries.

July 13
• The department was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call on Cardwell Eaton Road. The victim was transported to Highlands-Cashiers Hospital.

July 14
• The department was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at Highlands Manor Court. The victim was transported to Highlands-Cashiers Hospital.
to club approval. Membership available at market rate and subject to club approval. Located in the Saget Woods off Brevory Road. Four bedrooms, four full baths and two half baths. Spectacular view of Whiteside Mountain from the living areas and large porch with stone fireplace. Three additional fireplaces grace the great room, family room and master bedroom. Shown by appointment. Offered at $3,200,000.

Cullasaja Club. This spacious 3 bedroom, 3 bath Turning Leaf Condo at Highlands Cove has one of the best views available and has many extra and custom features. Offered at $660,000. Don’t miss looking at this one if you are in the market for a Turning Leaf Unit.

Cullasaja Club Cabin. Conveniently located near the yacht club and lake on a very quiet cul-de-sac. This charming home has 3 bedrooms each with it’s own bath. Many upgrades have been made by the present owners. A decorators dream and probably the best buy in Highlands Falls. $659,000.

New listing in Highlands Falls Country Club. Enjoy seasonal or year-round living surrounded by trees and the sound of a waterfall. This charming home has 3 bedrooms each with a private bath. This home is furnished for $1,395,000.

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Country Club Properties is the number one source for quality homes in Highlands, North Carolina. We are located at 354 Main Street in Highlands and 120 Wright Square in Sylva.  Call us, visit us, or send us an email and we’ll be happy to assist you in your search for a home in our amazing mountain town of Highlands. Please visit our website to see more of our properties!

Looking for a new home in the area? Check out these properties:

- **Calloway Club Cabin.** Located in the Calloway Club, this two bedroom, two bath cabin is positioned on a private lane with spectacular views of the surrounding mountains. The cabin features an open floor plan with a large living room, kitchen, and two bedrooms. It has stone fireplace, ceiling fans, and a wrap-around deck for enjoying the view. Offered at $469,000.
- **Sagee Woods Country Club.** This spacious 5 bedroom, 4.5 bathroom home is located on a private lane and features a beautiful view of Whiteside Mountain. The home includes a guest house, large deck, and boat slip. Offered at $1,595,000.
- **Highlands Long Range Property.** This lovely 3 bedroom, 3 bathroom home is located on a quiet street with an excellent view of Whiteside Mountain. The home includes a large deck, two fireplaces, and a two car garage. Offered at $595,000.