Arts Center on Chestnut Street.

[Image 55x773 to 813x878]

Wednesday night the Town Board took the final step toward implementing the Manager-Council form of government with the hiring of Town Manager - James R. Fatland.

Fatland, 57, is currently the Director of Finance and Administration for Monroe, N.C., where he basically oversees everything fiscal concerning the town.

Mayor Don Mullen said Fatland was the final candidate following a six-month process which netted 75 applications, narrowed to 10, then disbled to three interviews with Fatland and the final pick.

Fatland and his wife, who is a sixth-grade English Literature teacher in Buncombe County, have three grown children, 34, 31, and 28.

Fatland said though he expects to be on the job by the first week in January, his wife has one more year until retirement, so she will move to Highlands at that time.

Prior to taking the job in Monroe last year, Fatland was the Town Manager and Chief Financial Officer of Tryon, N.C., for six years, which he likened to Highlands.

"When you work for a small town, you use the entire experience you've gained in your career and are able to.

See MANAGER page 14

LEFT

Superintendent seeks calendar change for 2009

Superintendents from seven school districts serving the six far western counties of North Carolina and representatives from SCC, WCU and Tri-County Community College have joined forces to establish a common school calendar separate from the one initiated three years ago by the state.

When NC General Statute 115C-84.2 was passed to "boost the economy in eastern North Carolina by extending summer for businesses and families," it changed the school calendars across the state.

Macon County has applied for a calendar waiver since the calendar laws changed but since the district doesn't miss 10 school days per year due to snow or inclement weather, Superintendent Dan Brignaman said previous requests have been denied.

Due to the location and size of public schools in Western North Carolina, which oftentimes affects course offerings, high school students dual enroll at Southwest Community College, Western Carolina University and Tri-County Community College to get courses they need and to get a jump-up on college.

When the calendar changed, so did course alignment which means a two- to three-week gap between institution offerings.

"The way it is now, students are left hanging when these courses are already in motion which means they are behind," said Brignaman.

Consequently, at the Nov. 24 school board meeting, see CALENDAR page 21.

Illegal criminals tracked

Figures are now in revealing how the Macon County Sheriffs Office is dealing with illegal alien criminals in its system.

From January 1, 2008 through November 7 the Sheriffs Office sent 154 Illegal Alien Queries (IAQs) to the Law Enforcement Support Center (LESC).

This ranked Macon County 13th out of 100 counties in the state and first in Western North Carolina.

See CRIMINALS page 15

The Highlands Annual Christmas Parade is Saturday at 11 a.m. on Main Street and the Highlands United Methodist Church is sponsoring the return of the camels who will parade with the three wise men.

For a yummy treat during the parade pick up a homemade pumpkin roll from the ladies of the Eastern Star who will be selling them on Main Street. Right after the parade there is a Carol Sing at First Presbyterian Church featuring harp, song, pipe organ and bagpipes; the Alternative Market and free lunch at the Episcopal church; Santa at the Visitor Center; a wine tasting at Old Edwards Inn & Spa and the Historical Society's Joe Webb Christmas Showhouse from 1-5 p.m.

Photo by Jim Lewicki

This Week in Highlands

This is part 6 of a multi-part series which began Oct. 30.

Recap:

Following an hour-long, intense and enlightening presentation by Middle East expert Sandra Mackey on Oct. 20 concerning the ramifications of the U.S. presence in the Middle East, Mackey took several questions from the audience.

Question 1: Can you explain the ramifications of the new American embassy being built in Iraq?

There's a new American embassy which has been under construction since early on in the occupation and it's supposed to be the biggest U.S. embassy in the world.

Understandably, this is causing a lot of talk in the region.

Everyone wants to know why is it there? It's translating bad PR and don't know if it's because what we're doing is unsavory or what but it's not good PR.

The facts is the U.S. wants to keep permanent bases in Iraq so we can get troops

See MACKEY page 20

Events


• Santa will be at the Highlands Rec Park, Call 526-3556 for info.
• Christmas Showhouse 1-5 Sat. & Sun. Dec. 6 & 7
• Bingo at the Highlands Community Center every Thursday 7 p.m.
• Step Aerobics with Tina Rogers Mon., Wed., Fri.
• Christmas Carol Sing at First Presbyterian Church featuring harp, song, pipe organ and bagpipes; the Alternative Market and free lunch at the Episcopal Church.
• Wine Tastings at Old Edwards Inn & Spa in the Hummingbird Piano Bar in the inn. 2-4 p.m. $20 applies to purchase.
• At Health Tracks at the hospital, various exercise classes. Call Jeanette at 526-1200.
• Middle School students After School Program from 3-5 p.m. at the Rec Park. Call 526-3556 for info.
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Reach out to those in need...even in Highlands

Dear Editor,

Before moving to Highlands seven years ago, I lived in Atlanta where I worked with an organization that served the downtown Atlanta homeless population. Anyone who has worked with the homeless knows, there is a high degree of addiction and mental illness among them in our cities.

But surely not in this wonderful town of ours!

I had never seen a homeless and/or mentally ill person on the streets in Highlands until last week and I still don’t know what his problem was. I only know that in the midst of all the beauty and splendor that we live in, I saw someone who didn’t fit, who seemed to be having mental difficulties and I didn’t know how to help him or what to do.

I was heading into High Country Photo in Highlands Plaza when I heard a shout. I looked up and saw a man sitting alone on a bench in front of a restaurant window. He was a young man, dark hair and probably Hispanic. I noticed rather odd abnormal, jerky movements of his arms and legs and he seemed to be saying something to himself, looking down at the bench where he was sitting.

I assumed he must be waiting for someone inside the restaurant but 30 minutes later when I came out of the photo shop, he was still there. I watched him carry on a conversation with an invisible person as I started my car and drove off. Before I got through town, I knew I had to go back. I had found a lost animal, I would have called the humane society, but this lost person, I didn’t know what to do or whom to call. I didn’t know if this man was mentally ill, lost or sick. I went into a few stores to ask if anyone knew him or what could be done and no one knew what to do with him. I called my priest but he was not available at the time. I watched as the young man finally got up and began to walk behind Bryson’s Food Store in that same halting, jerky pattern, rubbing his hair and talking to himself.

When I arrived at my home, a return message from my priest suggested that the best thing to do was to call the police. In Atlanta, unless someone was disturbing the peace or violent, we did not do that. But I did. A policewoman asked me to describe the situation and her response was so immediately reassuring. She said she would get into her car right away and drive up to the shopping center and that she would continue to keep an eye out for him. She encouraged me, as I do you with this letter, to always call the police when someone in our midst seems to be in need. He wasn’t bothering anyone so the tendency is not to get involved but he needed help.

In this community of so many good people who do so much for so many, sometimes the ones who need our help are right in front of us.

I called my priest but he was not done and no one knew what to do with him. I finally got up and began to walk behind Bryson’s Food Store in that same halting, jerky pattern, rubbing his hair and talking to himself.

I noticed rather odd abnormal, jerky movements of his arms and legs and he seemed to be saying something to himself, looking down at the bench where he was sitting.

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In this community of so many good people who do so much for so many, sometimes the ones who need our help are right in front of us.

Helen Moore
Highlands

Jackpot’s Pot brimming over

My dear friends of the Highlands Community,

I have always taken pride in remaining in the background, but your love, prayers and support during my recent surgery has placed me in the forefront. I am not accustomed to being in this situation. Please accept my whole-hearted appreciation for all you’ve done to help in my recovery.

Love,

Jack Pot

‘Shop with a Cop’

Dear citizens,

It’s that time of year again when all of us at your Sheriff’s office are preparing for our annual “Shop With a Cop” event and as always we are asking for our communities’ help! It’s your money we’re asking for.

With your help, officers will pick up local children at their homes and take them Christmas shopping at WalMart, followed by dinner with the officer compliments of Burger King. Then back to the Sheriff’s office or police department to wrap the gifts. The only requirement is that before the child finishes shopping they buy one small gift for anyone they wish. This year’s event will include officers from the Macon County Sheriff’s Office, Franklin Police Department, Highlands Police Department, NC Highway Patrol, NC Wildlife Commission and the NC State Bureau of Investigations. We all hope to bring big smiles to more Macon County children than ever before.

There are no county dollars used to fund this program which can only be a success with your help. Please send check or money order by Dec. 12 to: MCSO “Shop with a Cop” at 1820 Lakeside Drive Franklin NC 28734.

Thanks in advance
Sheriff Robert Holland
School board officials sworn in

On Monday, Dec. 1, newly elected Board of Education members were sworn in by Macon County Clerk of Court Vic Perry. Frieda Bennett, who won the Highlands seat, was sworn in separately when inclement weather prohibited her from being at the ceremony with Bobby Bishop, Tommy Baldwin, and Jim Breedlove.

The next school board meeting is Monday, Dec. 15 at 6 p.m.

• OBITUARY •

Nicholas Moschouris

Nicholas Moschouris, 57, of Highlands, NC, died Friday, November 28, 2008 at his residence. He was a native of the borough of Manhattan, NY, the son of Juanita Porgiates Moschouris of Highlands, NC and the late Bill Moschouris. He was a restaurant owner and active in the community and in civic affairs. He was a member of Highlands United Methodist Church.

In addition to his mother, he is survived by his wife, Patricia Aldrich Moschouris, a daughter, Theodora Mary Moschouris of the home, and a brother, James Moschouris of Franklin, NC. He was preceded in death by a sister, Irene Sanchez-Colon.

A memorial service will be held Thursday, December 4 at 3 p.m. at the Highlands United Methodist Church, with Reverends Paul Christy and Eddie and Kim Ingram officiating.

Memorials may be made to Mountain Top Relay for Life or to the Highlands United Methodist Church Capitol Fund, 315 Main Street, Highlands, NC 28741.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Nicholas Moschouris

Obituary Notice

- Board of Education members were sworn in.
- Nicholas Moschouris died on November 28, 2008.
- He was a restaurant owner and active in the community.
- Services will be held on December 4th.
- Memorials can be made to Mountain Top Relay for Life or Highlands United Methodist Church Capitol Fund.

New Listing Bordering National Forest

Completely renovated. Beautiful hardwood floors, hardwood custom countertops, native stone facing fireplace in great room with gas stove in master bedroom, barn siding interior walls, jacuzzi tub in master bedroom, loft, excellent mountain view in a private setting. Borders USFS. Would make an excellent vacation rental, second home or full time residence. $185,000. MLS #666663. Sherman Pope. 828-787-2121.

Visit us at 468 Main Street • next to Wolfgang's Restaurant & Bistro
Thank God it’s over

On Thanksgiving Day, 14 Wooldridges poured into our home to drink, swim, prepare a sumptuous feast, tell jokes, war stories and then party some more. When things quieted down for the big feed, 16 family members sat down, quietly prayed and gave thanks to God for all we have. That’s what we Wooldridges do on Thanksgiving Day.

Man, oh man, was it exciting as everyone arrived from all parts of the world, smiling, hugging, etc. By Sunday evening I was on my knees in the living room giving thanks they were all gone. The 14 “missus” decided she would try to keep it simple this year (ha) and serve turkey breasts instead of the whole bird. How to coordinate the spinach pie setting up in the oven with the turkey breasts being completely cooked while stirring the gravy while watching to see if the biscuits were browning while cooking the vegetables is always a major stress factor for her. This, in the midst of screaming kids running through the house, asking for water, telling her they’re hungry and asking when do we eat makes this event a major challenge. Amazingly, she did it well and she’s not going back to that again.

Max’s mom (The Maximus is our latest addition) rolled in with two versions of baked sweet potatoes mush, (that’s what I call it,) one covered with marshmallows and the other with some kind of scary stuff that I’m sure clogged my arteries on the first bite. Simply awesome!

Our daughter marched in with her family from the Mayport Naval Base in Jacksonville, FL, to prepare her version of ambrosia. It’s a guarded Navy secret so I won’t be giving out the ingredients. She also brought a killer after dinner drink containing Bailey’s Irish Cream mixed with chocolate liquor and Russian vodka. Hey, if you’re going to kill brain cells, that’s the way to do it.

Son Jeff and wife Lisa made a drop down? By the way, even Max celebrated himself and his crew to enjoy Thanksgiving dinner with their families. His orders said he was to leave right before Thanksgiving Day. (Please, don’t tell.) Everyone might want to take a minute and thank God this nation has men like Chuck who come and babysit the Nutcracker Ballet at our local playhouse on Friday evening. Some grandkids loved it and some…well, got a little wiggly. And thanks for allowing my son and I to miss that event and babysit Jake, the jake star dude, age two. We dubbed it “boy’s night in” and celebrated by racing Matchbox cars and shooting whip cream straight from the can into our mouths. Awesome!

I was honored to read Don Swanson included me in his things to be thankful for, even though I wound up next to electric toothbrushes on his list. Thanks, Don for your conservative viewpoint. It is our most treasured freedom. And thanks to Kim for allowing everyone to write their viewpoint and exercise that freedom.

Finally, on Sunday evening, in the quiet of our home, I thanked the Lord for family, for good health, for friends and the freedom to pray in the manner we see fit.

In addition, this Thanksgiving weekend, I prayed our new president will not take our enemies lightly and will keep us as safe as we have been for the past eight years.

“Fabulous Food in a Casual Atmosphere”

Oak Street Café

Serving Lunch: 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Serving Dinner: from 5:30 p.m. until 7 days a week
Make your reservations for your private Christmas parties today!

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The government shouldn’t bail out the tobacco industry

Bull spent last week at a ski racing camp in Colorado. Lizzie and I came along for the ride. There are hundreds of kids from around the country. They are accompanied by coaches, and in some cases, family. We were on an elevator with two teen-aged racers from Lake Placid, NY, just back from the hot tub, towels wrapped around their waists. Their coach got on the elevator, looked sternly at one of his skiers and accused, “You’ve been smoking!”

“No! I haven’t,” he answered. His coach glared at him. Another passenger broke the tension, somewhat heroically, I thought, under the circumstances, by identifying himself as the smoker. “It’s a good thing,” the coach added, “or his career would have been over.” That’s a pretty strong no-smoking policy. I’ll bet that with penalties like that, few of his racers violate the rule.

It was recently reported that for the first time since the end of World War I, fewer than 20% of American adults smoke. The decline has been gradual, starting in 1964 with the Surgeon General’s first report on the harmful effects of smoking.

Tobacco advertising has been limited by law. Smoking has been restricted or banned in public buildings and work places. Laws have been enacted to ban smoking in, of all places, bars and restaurants. When I learned that smoking had been banned in Irish pubs, I thought the sky might truly fall. Irish pubs have apparently survived and Irish people are probably a little bit healthier. States and individuals have sued tobacco companies. Taxes on cigarettes have escalated. New York State imposes a tax of $2.75 on every pack. In South Carolina, a tobacco friendly state, the tax is 7 cents. Tobacco companies have experienced a dramatic drop in profits. The industry responded by targeting minorities in this country and the population of the developing world. But the noose is tightening. Third world countries are fighting back against the exploitation of their people. They are attempting steps similar to those adopted in the West, but with very limited resources and a culture of corruption. At least they are trying, and apparently making a little progress.

The tobacco industry has manipulated the nicotine content of cigarettes in order to make them more addictive. When I was a college student, representatives of the tobacco companies handed out free packs to students as they walked from class to class. During World War II the companies gave out free cigs to wounded veterans. When I was in medical school, a vet in the VA Hospital could still buy a pack for a dime. Maybe it was patriotism. The more cynical might see it as part of a business plan to ensnare as many smokers as possible.

They say that societal costs in the U.S. amount to $193 billion a year, and that five million people die worldwide each year from tobacco caused illness. It would be a mystery why the sale of so dangerous a drug is still legal, were it not for the realization of the power of the industry in tobacco producing states. Lizzie reminds me that smoking is a choice. It is not the choice of victims of second-hand smoke, or premature and low birth-weight infants, born to smoking mothers. It is arguable if it is a choice of teens and pre-teens, lured to smoking by the idea that it is mature and sophisticated. It is not the choice of taxpayers who subsidize the cost of health care for smokers. It may be a choice, but if so, it is a very poor one. I’d love to see at least tobacco sales outlawed. It probably won’t happen. I’ll be satisfied if the government doesn’t bail them out when times get really tough.

Got a house or land to sell? Sell it in Highlands’ Newspaper. $5 a week for 20 words, or $29 a week for picture ad. Call 526-0782 or email: highlandseditor@aol.com

Happy Holidays!
**Reflections from Turtle Pond**

**Status quo we can believe in**

O.K. I can understand why President Obama is giving Senator Hillary Clinton a Cabinet position (although I’m not sure why she wants it), since she basically tied him for the Democratic nomination. The people who seem most excited about this are the political cartoonists, who get to start attacking the Clintons all over again.

I’m having a lot of trouble with the idea of Obama keeping Robert Gates as Defense Secretary. Obama won the Democratic nomination for president partly because he was the candidate most opposed to the Iraq War and the Pentagon is the place where he would expect the most definitive break from the current administration. Obviously, Gates was not Defense Secretary when the war began, but how could Obama possibly keep anyone from the current administration? I mean, this will be the first time a new president has ever kept a Pentagon chief from a predecessor party. Obama calls it a “show of bipartisan continuity in a time of war.” Change? Hello?

The biggest problem I’m having with Obama’s economic team. The president-elect’s choices for his top economic advisers — Timothy Geithner as Treasury Secretary and Lawrence Summers as senior White House economic adviser — both served in the Clinton White House. They are also both protégés of Robert Rubin, Clinton’s first Treasury Secretary and Lawrence Summers as senior White House economic adviser — both served in the Clinton White House. They are also both protégés of Robert Rubin, Clinton’s first Treasury Secretary and current director of Citigroup. People have been talking about Obama as if he’s going to be a reincarnation of FDR and initiate Keynesian economic policies (meaning large government investment). Yet, the policies of “Rubinomics” are nothing like what Obama has talked about; Jared Bernstein of the liberal Economic Policy Institute called them “centrist economic policies which were too concerned with deficit reduction and not focused enough on investment programs for labor and the middle class.”

“Sometimes it seems like there is no one in this senior group who is the outsider to this club,” said Robert Kuttner, a colleague of Mr. Bernstein’s at the EPI, “Where is the diversity of opinion in this economic team?”

Many of my readers may think it’s a good thing that Obama has hired economists who are not interested in more liberal “socialist” policies, but think we can all agree that what we need from the new administration are people who can see clearly how to clean up the mess in the financial world. Here, again, Obama’s choices are appalling.

While reading about these men, I found that I need to admit to a mistake. In an earlier column (“Consequences”) I accused the Republicans, particularly Sen. Phil Gramm, of tearing down the Depression-era banking regulations which led to the current mess we are in. I was wrong. The Democrats were complacent also. During their tenure as Treasury Secretary both Rubin and Summers urged Congress to remove the regulatory walls between banks, brokerage, and insurance companies.

In 1998 Summers testified before Congress that legislation being considered to regulate the financial industry called a “derivative” could, in his words, “throw the whole system out of whack.” During that Senate appearance, Summers did acknowledge that there could possibly be problems with derivatives, but he wasn’t worried because the institutions buying and selling, “the kinds of contracts are largely sophisticated financial institutions that would appear to be eminently capable of protecting themselves from any problems with derivatives.”

In other words fear not, the geniuses of Wall Street and the world’s financial markets know what they are doing.

Congress went along and deregulated the financial industry and declined to regulate derivatives. Rubin left government to head Citigroup and profited enormously from the deregulation before helping bring Citigroup to the point of bankruptcy. Great mentor.

The L.A. Times has a very interesting article about campaign contributions from the financial industry and declined to regulate derivatives. Rubin left government to head Citigroup and profited enormously from the deregulation before helping bring Citigroup to the point of bankruptcy. Great mentor.

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Since 2002, the sector has contributed more than $1 billion to congressional candidates, with Republics getting an edge during that period, according to federal lobbying records. Democratic nominee Sen. Barack Obama took in $22.5 million, followed by Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton with $21.5 million. Sen. John McCain, the Republican nominee, was closest behind with $19.6 million.

The nonpartisan research organization Center for Responsive Politics studied votes in 1999 on a piece of legislation, the Financial Services Modernization Act, that deregulated the banking sector, allowing commercial banks to compete with brokerage firms in buying and selling stocks.

Those who supported lifting restrictions on how commercial banks, investment banks and insurance companies could go about their business received more than twice as much money in campaign contributions.

**See BRUGGER page 10**
One swan a-swimming

Three miles south of Highlands, the road to Dillard, GA, goes through a golf course. It is not just any golf course. It is the one that the great Bobby Jones designed just before he created his masterpiece at Augusta.

Jones had a personal stake in the Highlands Country Club course. He built his retirement home straight across the crescent-shaped lake which surrounds the 18th green, from the flag. Like the rest of the course, the 18th is a demanding hole, a chip across the lake to a trap of a green that slopes away to all sides so approach shots that are only slightly off, “get wet” as the golfers say.

The whole course is demanding. There is water on 14 of its 18 holes. And in the summer when the rhododendrons are in bloom and drooping their large white petals, it is a fruitless enterprise even to attempt to find a ball that has strayed from the fairway.

But this story is not about the golf course. It is about the swans that lived on that lake for at least 10 years. The perfect picture, which I have preserved only in my mind, not on film, is at the close of the day. The dying sun turns the perfect grass into a glowing, emerald green. It white-washes the wooden front of Jones’ former home. And if the timing is just right, it catches the two swans swimming in tandem, across a lake as still as glass, behind the green and in front of Jones’ house.

Swans are one of the rarities in the animal kingdom. They mate for life, as did these two. Unlike other birds, where the male is bright and showy and the female dull and camouflaged, the hen and the drake among swans are seemingly identical. I’m sure they knew the difference, but to my untrained eye they were the same.

It was a cob and a pen for sure, because about three years ago they had a clutch of cygnets, who swam with them as they grew that summer. Then in the fall, the children were gone.

On the water, up on the grass, near or in the swan house that was their shelter beyond the low stone bridge across a neck in the lake – anywhere in their small world – the swans were usually together as a pair.

Then, two weeks ago as we drove through the golf course every day on the way to town for the mail, we saw only one swan. For fivedays, we saw just one. So we stopped at the Club’s security office next to the lake, and asked whether anything had happened to the other swan.

It had. One swan had gotten sick and died, of botulism the guard guessed, from something eaten from the bottom of the shallow lake. So, now there is just one swan, a lonely gentleman whose lady had died. Because we cannot tell who died, and who is left behind, I’m sure my lady love would write that the gentleman died, and the lady swan lives on.

When couples are mated for life and one dies, often the other dies soon after, having little reason to go on. It is children, grandchildren, friends, professions and avocations which keep the survivors in such families continuing on. So, how is it with this oneswan?

He has no descendants, no friends, no pastimes. He does have his memories of his mate. He must have that, or else how could swansmate for life?

Now, he spends very little time in the water. Most times, he is up on the grassy hillside below the tee of the 18th hole. Does he stay out of the water because he remembers the hours without number when he swam there with her? Does he stay on that hillside perhaps because that is where she died?

There are few things more elegant, evocative and inspiring, than two swans swimming on a still lake, almost always within touching distance of each other.

For the reverse of all the same reasons, there are few things sadder than one swan swimming on a glassy lake, on a golf course, high in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina.

About the Author: John Armor practiced law in the Supreme Court for 33 years. He now lives with his lady love on a mountain in the Blue Ridge of North Carolina. John_Armor@aya.yale.edu
You may find this hard to believe, but there are a small number of people who think I’m off my rocker. This may be paranoia on my part, but I don’t think so.

Personally, I don’t think their opinion is worth the emotional energy it consumes, but that’s their business. Where does this misnarration come from? Some say I’m obsessed with the Global Warming scam. Others say it’s a fixation on the Global Warming scam. Well, I admit to having the subject on my mind from time to time, but I find it hard to forget it when it was 9.4 degrees in Franklin (according to Weather Underground) as we left our house the other day.

An interesting item crossed my radar screen recently, posted on the Telegraph.co.uk website, which I find a reliable and useful source for news concerning US issues. They seem to be outside our media spin machine and actually report news without editorial suasion. This story will only be of interest to skeptics, such as myself, or those with open minds. If the attitude of a crisis caused by man-made global warming has been woven into your religious beliefs, you may want to turn to another column.

I am going to excerpt from their well done article rather than paraphrase it. More credibility don’t you know? “A surreal scientific blunder last week raised a huge question mark about the temperature records that underpin the worldwide alarm over global warming. On Monday, NASA’s Goddard Institute of Space Studies (GISS), which is run by Al Gore’s chief scientific advisor, James Hansen, and one of four bodies responsible for monitoring global temperatures, announced that last month was the hottest October on record.

“This was startling. Across the world there were reports of unseasonable snow and plummeting temperatures last month (you heard it here first), from the American Great Plains to China, and from the Alps to New Zealand. China’s official news agency reported that Tibet had suffered its worst snowstorm ever.”

NOAA registered 63 local snowfall records and 115 lowest-ever temperatures for the month.

“So what explained the anomaly? GISS’s computerized temperature maps seemed to show readings across a large part of Russia had been up to 10 degrees higher than normal.” Based on an astonishing discovery, “the reason for the freak figures was that scores of temperature records from Russia and elsewhere were not based on October readings at all. Figures from the previous month had simply been carried over and repeated two months running.”

Well now, that’s precise science. “The error was so glaring that when it was reported, GISS began hastily revising their figures. This only made the confusion worse, because to compensate for the lowered temperatures in Russia, GISS claimed to have discovered a new ‘hotspot’ in the Arctic in a month when satellite images were showing Arctic sea-ice recovering so fast from its summer melt that three weeks ago, it was 30 per cent more extensive than at the same time last year.

“GISS spokesmen lamely explained that the reason for the error in the Russian figures was that they were obtained from another body, and that GISS did not have the resources to exercise proper quality control over the data that was supplied with. This is an astonishing admission: the figures published by Dr. Hansen’s institute are not only one of the four data sets that the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) relies on to promote its case for global warming, but they are the most widely quoted, since they consistently show higher temperatures than the others.

“If there is one scientist more responsible than any other for the alarm over global warming it is Dr. Hansen, who set the whole scare in gear back in 1988 with his testimony to a U.S. Senate committee chaired by Al Gore.” Well, there you are. A proof of colossal proportions was born and has been perpetuated since by Hansen, who continues to supply erroneous information from the scientific side and Gore, who continues to use this hocus-pocus science for personal gain (big time).

“Last week’s episode is far from the first time Dr. Hansen’s methodology has been called into question. In 2007 he was forced to revise his published figures for US surface temperatures, to show that the hottest decade of the 20th century was not the 1990s, as he had claimed, but the 1930s.”

“I realize a single article does not conclusively prove a point, but cumulatively, together with all the other solid information I’ve supplied you with, I believe it’s getting hard to deny the fraud.”
Through it we sympathize with others; we “walk in their shoes.” Used the imagination is a gift we use to give ourselves to others. Through it we sympathize with others; we “walk in their shoes.” Used the imagination is a gift we use to give ourselves to others.

I think imagination is a gift we use to give ourselves to others. Through it we sympathize with others; we “walk in their shoes.” Used the imagination is a gift we use to give ourselves to others. Through imagination we can recreate stories and enter into the experience of them. Imagination is a gift we use to give ourselves to others.

In clean shop rags to keep him warm and tight. The baby is born there; they were planning on meeting no longer live there. The town has been turned upside down by the new regime. Bethany is now close to a major city, like Charlottesville, VA, near Washington DC. They would travel by bus and, of course, she’d be pregnant; but

The pilgrimage would take them from one side of the country to the other — say, from a small, Midwest town like Sioux Falls, Iowa to a town close to a major city, like Charlotteville, VA, near Washington DC. They would travel by bus and, of course, she’d be pregnant; but when these days it doesn’t raise eyebrows as it did then. Along the way, they encounter numerous check points and it takes them a week to arrive, because the transportation companies are now required to give free rides to the new government “officials” and troops. They arrive in Charlotteville exhausted and realize that the contact they were planning on meeting no longer live there. The town has been turned upside down by the new regime. Bethany is now close to giving birth and it is time! They search for a hospital, but none will take them in. They have no insurance and no cash left. All clinics are closed.

The inn

An inn and a situation that is unusual would be needed to create more problems for them. They find a gas station food mart that will let them use their public restroom and supply room (Sanitizer’s closet). The baby is born there; they name him Salvador and lay him in the top of a garbage can and wrap him with clean shop rags to keep him warm and tight.

Of course, the owners of the food mart were surprised to have a baby born in their store.

Start, angels, shepherds?

So what about a star and the angels and shepherds? All would need to be odd and extraordinary, so here goes.

Well, the star was a sign that only foreigners seemed to have perceived in Jesus’ time. It was observable to all, but only noticed by a few. Hmmm… what is later called a “binary” pulsar (an imaginary name for the alignment of three pulsars) creates a glitch that is somehow picked up by internet programmers that are only allowed to work on the “lower,”
... BRUGGER continued from page 6

from those interests as did those who opposed the measure.

“The 195 Democrats who supported the legislation received an average of $179,920 in the nearly three years leading up to its passage. The 59 Democrats who opposed it received an average of just $83,475.

“In addition to campaign contributions, the industry also invested heavily in lobbying. During 2008 alone, securities and investment firms spent $46,477,562 trying to influence members of Congress.”

If you’d like to read something really scary, read “The End of Wall Street’s Boom,” by Michael Lewis (Portfolio.com, search title). Lewis, who first chronicled Wall Street’s excesses in Liar’s Poker, (published in 1989) profiles some of the people who tried to expose the building scandal — including Meredith Whitney, a little known banking analyst who declared over a year ago that “Citigroup had so mismanaged its affairs that it would need to slash its dividend or go bust,” wrote Lewis. “This woman wasn’t saying that Wall Street bankers were corrupt. She was saying they were stupid.” And after finishing the article you will agree with her.

Obama has addressed criticism similar to this column by saying, “What we are going to do is combine experience with fresh thinking. But understand where the vision for change comes from first and foremost: It comes from me.”

We’ll see. And if you think this is just liberal whining check out a column of mine from last February (“Just what Do We Mean by Change?”); I really didn’t believe Obama would bring “change.”

All of Katie Brugger’s columns are available on her website: www.kathleenbrugger.com

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By Ryan Potts  
**Varsity Girls**

The Highlanders and Lady Highlanders returned from a long Thanksgiving break to earn a pair of hard fought home victories against the Hayesville Yellow Jackets the evening of Tuesday, Dec. 2.

In the early matchup, the Lady Highlanders jumped out to a slight first quarter lead thanks to some conversions off of Lady Jacket turnovers. Both teams were a bit shaky with the ball, but once the rust was shaken off, both teams performed admirably in what turned out to be a stalemate gamethroughout.

The Lady Highlander lead swelled to as many as 7 points in the final minute, but Hayesville rallied to cut the lead to two and sent freshman Emily Munger to the line for two pressure packed freethrows.

In this instance, youth served as Munger sank both freethrows and gave the Lady Highlanders a 36-32 home victory. Lady Highlander coach Brett Lamb was “proud of the girls for a good win early in the season.” “There is still work to be done,” said Lamb, “but it is always nice to learn while you win.”

The Lady Highlanders feature a balanced scoring effort, with six players tallying at least 5 points. Kate Parks pulled down 9 rebounds for the Lady Highlanders and Taylor Bunas added 3 steals.

**Varsity Boys**

In the nightcap, the Highlanders were still stinging from their disappointing effort against Rabun County and were ready to play after a week and a half layoff.

Highland's started out with plenty of pressure early, using a stifling defensive force, 11 first-half Yellow Jacket turnovers on their way to a 31-17 halftime lead.

Unfortunately, the Highlanders saw that lead evaporate away in the third quarter due to some careless turnovers against Hayesville's 1-2-2 zone press. What looked to be an easy Highlander win suddenly turned into a nail biter, as Hayesville tied the game in the dying seconds and forced overtime.

In the extra session, the Highlanders were able to take the lead on a terrific baseline jumper from Michael Shearl and held on for a 59-57 victory.

The Highlanders featured balanced scoring, with Ezra Herz leading the way with 15, followed by Shearl with 13 and Michael Baty and Andrew Billingsley both with 9.

Both Highlander Varsity teams played Andrews Wednesday night in a makeup of the 12/1 game, but results were not available at press time.

Friday night features the conference opener against defending LSMC champion Nantahala.

Friday night is also Homecoming at Highlands High School – 6:30 girls, 8 p.m. boys. Please come and get Highlands Gym rocking for this crucial matchup for superiority in the Little Smoky Mountain Conference.

**Girls and boys beat Hayesville**

**Photo by Noel Atherton**

Ezra Herz sink a basket against Hayesville.

News, events, sales, specials…we've got it all cover on the street and on the web at www.highlandsinfo.com
Club helps prepare for dinner

For the 12th year in a row, The Girls’ Clubhouse decorated the tables at the Highlands Civic Center for the annual community Thanksgiving Dinner held the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. This year, Cospers Flowers loaned the club the bud vases for the centerpieces. The girls decorated 30 tables for the expected 240 people, but in the end 260 people came. Pictured from left are 6th graders Veronica Garcia, Ivy Satterwhite, McKinley Mosely, Meredith Garren and Grace Brassard. Not pictured are April Moss and Elizabeth Housto.

Weather Channel puts Highlands, and its weather on the map

Everyone in Highlands knows Father Winter has come early this year with lower than normal temperatures and the first snowfall of the year before the end of October. Now, everyone in the country will know that Highlands can thrive all year long, even with an abnormally cold and snowy winter upon it! Pictured with the Weather Channel News crew, which rolled in Monday night and stayed at the Hampton Inn, is Bob Kieltyka, director of the chamber of commerce.

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BIG VIEW · HFCC · Absolutely one of the most Unique Comfortable Homes on the Market. Fabulous Views of Whiteside Mtn. Open Floor Plan with High Ceilings & Large Rooms, Five Bedrooms, Five Baths & Two Half Baths. Home has been extensively updated. Kitchen features Cherry Cabinets new Wolfe Subzero Stainless Steel Appliances, Handcrafted Italian Tile Countertops, Bathrooms feature Tumbled Travertine Flooring, Handcrafted Italian Tile Backsplash. Stainless Steel Appliances, Handcrafted Italian Tile Countertops, Heart of Pine Hardwood Floors on both Levels, New HVAC System, Generator, Two laundry rooms, Offered at $2,600,000 - MLS#-64158

DAZZLING VIEWS FROM THE TOP OF HIGHLANDS COUNTRY CLUB. Distinctively elegant, this 8 bedroom, 8 1/2 bath home is a perfect family retreat. One of its unique features is the Blue Valley View in back and Whiteside Mountain in front. The elevator that serves all 3 floors has a glass wall to allow you to view the mountains. There are 6 fireplaces, a spacious entertaining kitchen with custom cabinets, granite countertops and breakfast island. There is a game room and exercise room. Features include, Lutron lighting system, invisible dog fencing, extensive electronics system, alarm system, generator, Caradco doors and windows and phantom screens. The main living area consists of a formal sitting room with glass front & back, a keeping room, formal dining, kitchen, master bedroom with fireplace and an office. In addition there is an attached guest house at ground level. The grounds are beautifully designed with extensive rock work, cobblestone driveway and additional parking front & back. Membership at Highlands Country Club available, subject to approval. Offered at $5,500,000. mls #65982

MIRROR LAKE AREA. This home has just undergone a complete remodel, new heat, new air, floors, walls, electric, plumbing, kitchen and decks. Walk to Mirror Lake or town. Nice, flat lot make this a must see. Offered at $329,000. mls #64057

CUTE DOES NOT APPLY TO this great mountain cabin located off Flat Mountain on Viewpoint Road. Wood floors, open rooms. Two bedrooms plus a sleeping area, two baths, real stone fireplace. Huge covered porch. Offered at $465,000. mls #59751

A GREAT PACKAGE. Located on Windy Hill Road, this charming house sits on a five acre wooded knoll with a ridgeline view into Georgia. The dwelling has over 2500 square feet of heated living area plus a garage and large covered deck. Three bedrooms, three baths with loads of storage. Energy efficient construction with 2 x 6 walls make getting utility bills bearable in winter or summer. Walls of windows bring in lots of light to the living spaces that are well laid out and finished with hardwood floors and lofts ceilings. Propane cooktop and freestanding heater will keep you functioning even during power outages. Offered unfurnished and in move in condition at $495,000. mls #63172

Enjoy a noisy babbling brook off the huge rear deck from this freshly renovated 3 bedroom, 2 bath home located on Laurelwood Lane. It is walking distance to town and in a nice neighborhood. Great privacy as this backs up to the dedicated green space park at Ravenel Ridge. Large covered porch off master bedroom, old fashioned master bath features hex tile and a claw foot tub. Lower level has den, one bedroom/ storage room, workshop. Offered at $545,000. mls #64090

WALK TO TOWN LOCATION. This is a wonderfully convenient home located in a small residential enclave of homes known as "Pinecrest" and is about a half of a mile from downtown Highlands. Quality construction features custom stained pine floors, 2 gas fireplaces. Vaulted ceilings, smart wiring, professional design in choice colors and finishes. Custom "cooks" kitchen with large island and top of the line appliances. Huge 20 x 20 bedroom with massive bath suite that features walk in shower, marble floors and tile. 2 private guest suites plus an office/den and large exercise/ family room. 2 car garage with additional driveway for plenty of parking. A nicely landscaped .72 acre lot with 2 fountains, irrigation system and flat grassy yard to enjoy. Offered at $1,495,000. mls #65565

CUTE DOES NOT APPLY TO this great cottage located on a corner lot off Wyanoak Road in the Mirror Lake section in the city of Highlands. Real stone fireplace, 2 bedrooms, 2 baths together with an open kitchen/living room on the main level. Lower level has additional family room with bath and guest room. Flat, usable yard is pet friendly. Offered at $459,000. mls #64038

Sequoyah Lakefront Home- This 3 bedroom 4.5 bath home sits on 1.18 acre on Lake Sequoyah. Great in-town location just minutes from Main Street and walking distance to “On The Verandah” Restaurant. Large Master Suite with stone fireplaces in the bedroom and master bathroom. Enjoy the expansive lake views throughout the house, open decks and your own private dock. Start making your family traditions this year on Lake Sequoyah. Offered at $1,037,900. mls #65872

This classy mountain cottage stretches out to entertain but keeps the cozy feel of a mountain home. Open plan with cathedral ceilings. A wall of glass to bring in the light from the double porch that overlooks the pond. Sit outside to the relaxing sound of falling water. 3 bedrooms, 3 baths, plus a huge open loft. Top Quality finishes and craftsmanship make this an exceptional buy. Offered at $875,000. mls #65867

Brand new and oozing mountain charm. This 3 bedroom, 3 bath, plus a family room, features spacious rooms and high quality finishes. Large tile and slate in the baths. Plank floors, stone fireplace, custom kitchen with granite and stainless appliances, two large decks. It is located just a shot stroll from the community boathouse. Offered at $950,000.00 mls #65868

Beautiful setting. Large living area for entertaining with a large stone fireplace as the center piece. 3 bedrooms, 1-1/2 baths. Nice open floor plan. Could be used as a full time residence, seasonal or investment property. Lots of potential here. Offered at $240,000. mls #64859

This property offers panoramic views of the city and in a nice neighborhood. Great privacy as this backs up to the dedicated green space park at Ravenel Ridge. Large covered porch off master bedroom, old fashioned master bath features hex tile and a claw foot tub. Lower level has den, one bedroom/storage room, workshop. Offered at $545,000. mls #64090

Sequoyah Lakefront Home- This 3 bedroom 4.5 bath home sits on 1.18 acre on Lake Sequoyah. Great in-town location just minutes from Main Street and walking distance to “On The Verandah” Restaurant. Large Master Suite with stone fireplaces in the bedroom and master bathroom. Enjoy the expansive lake views throughout the house, open decks and your own private dock. Start making your family traditions this year on Lake Sequoyah. Offered at $1,037,900. mls #65872

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Library receives nature books

From left is Dixie Barton of the Mountain Garden Club, Hudson Librarian Mary Lou Worley, and Olivia Diamond, an avid reader. Photo by Wendi Diamond.

The Hudson Library has two new books about kids and nature, thanks to the Mountain Garden Club.

I Love Dirt is a book for young children, parents and grandparents to enjoy. The author, Jennifer Ward, provides simple suggestions for “52 activities to help you and your kids discover the wonders of nature.”

Activities are listed by season of the year and include answers to questions kids ask, like “Why does it rain?”

Whatever your age, be prepared to have all your senses delighted when you follow Ward’s suggestions. Her powers of observation are great, and she brings a fresh perspective even when writing about familiar activities.

For example, you may have spent time lying on your back on a lawn on a warm summer day, gazing at the clouds. But while you were finding animal shapes in the clouds, did you also pay attention to the softness of the blades of grass underneath you? That’s the type of detail you can expect from Jennifer Ward in I Love Dirt!

... MANAGER continued

The other book donated by the Mountain Garden Club is the new edition of Richard Louv’s Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder.

Louv’s book is a must-read for anyone concerned about the rise in obesity, stress, anxiety, depression, and attention disorders in children. Louv makes convincing arguments that these problems may be linked to daily routines that keep kids indoors, separated from nature.

First published in 2005, the book was updated and expanded earlier this year. The 2008 edition includes summaries of new research, a progress report by Louv, and discussion points for classrooms, communities and book groups.

“We’re very pleased to make both of these books available through the Hudson Library,” said Dixie Barton of the Mountain Garden Club. “Our club is dedicated to furthering interest in horticulture and conservation. We firmly believe that kids who get outdoors and have fun today will be better stewards of nature tomorrow.”

... MANAGER continued from page 1

where he was involved with downtown revitalization, and he was a budget and administrative analyst for the Orange County Sanitation District in Fountain Valley, California.

He earned a B.S. in accounting and finance from California State Polytechnic University in June 1976.

The Town Board spoke highly of Town Administrator Richard Betz, who announced some months ago that he would be resigning in March of 2009.

“Richard Betz has been an incredible employee and has been remarkable through this transition over the last six months,” said Commissioner Hank Ross. “As a board, we appreciate all he has done.”

Mayor Mullen echoed Ross’s comments.

“There isn’t another town employee who has given more in the way of service to this town. “

Commissioner Dennis DeWolf said he appreciated the job Betz has done.

“You have given of yourself to this town for so many years,” he said. “You have always responded quickly to me and you helped me get integrated as a commissioner. You will be sorely missed.”

The next Town Board meeting is Jan. 7.
Donation of 60 turkeys goes fast

On Mondays from 3:30-5:30 p.m., the doors open at the Food Pantry on Church Street Alley and members from 60 families in the community come to “shop” for food for free. This past week, an anonymous donor contacted Debbie Grossman of Fressers and donated 60 turkeys for Thanksgiving. As people left the pantry, they were presented with a turkey. Pictured is Debbie Grossman handing a turkey to a little recipient and her mother.

Photo by Kim Lewicki

... CRIMINALS continued from page 1

The Macon County Sheriff’s Office began participating in the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Criminal Alien Program (CAP) about a year ago. CAP focuses on identifying criminal aliens who are in federal, state and local detention facilities to ensure that they are not released into the community.

Sheriff Robert Holland said he is in favor of the program because it helps his department protect the citizens of Macon County whom it is bound to serve.

“This is a self-selecting program because illegal aliens who conduct or engage in criminal activity identify themselves. It has nothing to do with the workplace round-ups that you see on television. We haven’t taken part in any of that activity,” he said. “Again, these are people who we have come in contact with in jail. They are there because they have all been charged with some sort of crime which resulted in them having their name run through the IAQ.”

CAP is one component of the ICE ACCESS umbrella of services which also includes the 287(g) program and the Law Enforcement Support Center (LESC).

The mission of the LESC is to protect the United States and its people by providing timely immigration status and identity information to local, state and federal law enforcement agencies on aliens suspected, arrested or convicted of criminal activity.

Though distasteful to some factions in the community, Holland said it isn’t just a way to get “illegal aliens” out of the county.

“This program identifies criminal aliens only. We haven’t had one person deported who has not committed a crime. Again, this is self-selective. It’s pretty simple. They aren’t deported or reported, unless they commit a crime. And it’s important to point out that ICE only focuses on the most serious offenses,” said Holland.

The other seven counties in Western North Carolina also operate ICE 287(g) programs and access the Henderson County database, independent of the LESC, to determine an inmate’s immigration status.

The Sheriff’s Office will begin a transition to also use Henderson County’s ICE 287(g) program instead of the LESC for IAQs.

In 2009 the Charlotte ICE CAP office will transition to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week to support the seven ICE 287(g) programs in North Carolina.

This North Carolina model program is the first of its kind nationwide and may become the model for the rest of the United States.

– KL
**On-going Events**
- The Bascom is offering a host of art classes for preschoolers to pre-teens from now through the end of the school year. For more information, call (828) 526-4949, ext. 69, or visit www.thebascom.org.
- Friends of Panthertown work days, last Thursday of every month (time and location varies). Volunteers needed to maintain trails. For more information, contact Nina Elliott at 828-526-9838 (ext. 258) or friends.of.panthertown@gmail.com or online at www.fpva.org.
- Four churches prepare to “Walk to Bethlehem.” The Macon County Public Health Center is continuing a successful faith-based wellness program. Four local churches, with assistance from the Health Promotions Program at the public health center, are embarking on a virtual journey from Franklin to Bethlehem as a part of the “Walk to Bethlehem” program. The four participating churches include First United Methodist Church, Holly Springs Baptist Church, Prentiss Church of God, and Watauga Baptist Church. The Walk to Bethlehem program encourages church members to be more physically active and make healthier food choices. According to the Centers for Disease Control, everyone needs at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days to stay healthy. As a part of the Walk to Bethlehem program, the public health center provided a pre-event health screening to the churches.
- Collections for men and women overseas at Chestnut Hill Retirement community. A wide variety of items currently are needed, including books and magazines, CDs and DVDs, and small pocket books, which fit neatly in the BDUs (Battle Dress Uniforms). Phone cards, lounge pants, grey or black shirts, and cards of encouragement are also in great demand. Consumables such as insect repellent, lotions, and other hygiene products must come new, in original packaging. Monetary donations to fund the flat rate APO shipping at $10.95 per box should be left at the front desk of Chestnut Hill. The drop point for all items will be under the flagpole at the Chestnut Hill Clubhouse on Clubhouse Trail. For any questions, or to schedule a drop-off, contact Jeremy Duke in our community office at (828) 787-2114.
- Refuge Youth meets every Sun. night at 6:30 p.m. downstairs at Cullasa Edition of God. If you are in grades 6th-12th then this is the place to be! The church is located at 6301 Highlands Rd. next to Exxon. For more info, call youth ministers Matt and Candace Woodroof at 828-369-2114.
- Raffle of handcrafted Stiefel Botanical Book to Benefit The Bascom. To purchase a raffle ticket, call 526-4949, ext. 8#.
- Yoga at the Rec Park, 7:30 a.m Monday and Wednesdays. Call 526-4340 for information.
- Yoga in the bottom floor of Jane Woodruff Building, 10:30 a.m. Thursdays. Call 526-4340.
- NA open meeting every Saturday at 7:30 p.m. of the ACC Satellite Group at the Graves Community Church, 242 Hwy 107 N. in Cashiers. Call 800-764-0365 or go to the website: www.ncmana.org. 
- The Circle of Life support group continues at the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital at the Jane Woodruff room 201, 10 a.m. until noon. Call Barbara Buchanan at 526-1402 or Florence Flanagan at 743-2567.
- Pilates Classes Level 1 of Jane Woodruff at the hospital at 4 p.m. $10 per class. Call 526-5852.
- Middle School students After School Program from 3-5 p.m. at the Rec Park. The program is free and will include a snacks, homework help, arts/crafts, sports, community involvement projects, and mini field trips. Parents will be required to register their child(ren) upon their second day of attendance and children will be required to sign in daily. For more information please call 828.526.3556.

**Upcoming Events**

**Christmas Showhouse set for Dec. 6 & 7**

Sarah Sloan is one of six decorators now preparing a Joe Webb log house in Highlands to be featured as the Christmas Showhouse, held annually to benefit the Highlands Historical Society.

The Highlands Historical Society will be sponsoring a Christmas Showhouse on Saturday and Sunday, December 6 and 7, 2008 from 1-5 p.m. This year's house is a log home on Satulah Mountain, built in 1930 for the family of Leroy Brown of West Union, S.C. on a 7.5 acre plot that remains intact. The view from the house includes Whiteside Mountain, Big Bearpen and other mountains to the east.

Brown engaged Joe Webb to build the home, using chestnut logs. The house is described in a survey for the National Register of Historic Places as “one of the finest and best preserved of all the Webb homes.” Rooms in the house that will be decorated include the kitchen, dining room, living room, three bedrooms and a study.

Susan Jones from The Dry Sink in Highlands will decorate the kitchen; Barbara Smith the dining room; Nancy Ostema of Cosper Flowers the living room; and Connie Thompson of Basketworks in Cashiers one bedroom. Sarah Sloan, owner of Antiques and More in the Whistle Stop Mall in Franklin will decorate a bedroom and the study, and quilter Liz View of Cut 'n Patch, who has made a quilt specifically for one of the bedrooms, will decorate that room.

Tickets for the Christmas Showhouse are $15 each and may be purchased now at Cyano's Bookshop or on the days of the event in front of Bryson's Food Store, from which shuttles will run to the Showhouse. All proceeds benefit the Historical Society, which maintains Highlands' oldest standing home, the Prince House, the Historical Museum and Archives; and a former Bug Hill Cottage from Dr. Mary Lapham's Tuberculosis Sanitorium.
**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday**

- **Step Aerobics** with Tina Rogers at the Rec Park, 8-9 a.m., $10 per class or $50 a month.
- **Dance Aerobics with Susan**, 8:30 a.m. at the Rec Park.
- **First Mondays**
  - Participate in your hospital by joining the Auxiliary of the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Auxiliary meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 10 a.m. at the hospital.
  - **Men’s interdenominational Bible Study** at 8:30 a.m. at First Baptist Church.
- **Every Third Wednesday**
  - Study sessions at the Universal Unitarian Fellowship Hall in Franklin. A $5 soup-supper will be served at 5:30 p.m. The meeting starts at 6 p.m.
- **Newlands Conference Center** at 7:30 a.m.
- Men’s interdenominational Bible Study at 8:30 a.m. at First Baptist Church.
- **Ann Noseworthy's Art Gallery**
- **Bingo** at the Highlands Community Center at 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- **Al-Anon meeting**, noon at the Episcopal Church on Wednesdays.
- **Christmas Parade** until 2:30 p.m. at the Episcopal Church.
- **Annual Christmas Parade** 11 a.m. until noon on Main Street.

**... SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING from page 9**

“free” bandwidths of the internet. They realize that this is something they need to search out. The scientific community dismisses it, but it is picked up by some more esoteric researchers in Central Asia that make the trip to DC to inquire about this sign. (By the way, these researchers are part of a scientific consortium of “fringe” disciplines including Intelligent Design).

This group saw the sign for what it was: a miraculous communication.

The shepherds, well they were the outcasts, necessary but not welcomed. They play a vital role in society but do so in ways we would rather not have to face. I think of those in society who have been made slaves of sort. In our day it may be the migrant workers, who through their strong work ethic bolster our society, yet point out many of our cultures’ faults and flaws. They hear the good news; it is to them that the angels speak. They come to the food mart and they worship the baby. They rejoice and wherever they go tell the story. Through them a revival begins in the land.

So that’s my imaginary story. I imagine you could do better...

Why don’t you read the story again? It’s found in the Bible: In the gospel of Luke chapter 2 verses 1-20 and in the gospel of Matthew chapter 1 verses 18-21. Read and let yourself wonder. Imagine how Christmas (Jesus birth) might have been if it happened today. How would it change the way you celebrate Christmas?

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**Through Dec. 23**

- **“Winter Landscapes”** exhibition at The Bascom, featuring paintings by John MacKall and Deborah Squirrel. Free public opening reception Nov. 29 from 5-7 p.m. gallery hours are Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free. The Bascom is located inside the Hudson Library on Main Street in Highlands. For information, call (828) 526-4949 or visit www.thebascom.org.

**Thursday, Dec. 4**

- **Bingo** at the Highlands Community Center 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- **The movie, “The Kite Runner”** (2007) tells of the drastic changes in Afghanistan in recent years. After spending most of his life in California, Amir returns to Afghanistan to help his boyhood friend Hassan whose son is in trouble. The movie series is held in the Library Meeting Room, hosted by the Friends of the Albert Carlton – Cashiers Community Library at 7 p.m.
- **Saturday & Sunday, Dec. 6 & 7**
  - **Sanders’ Family Christmas** (“sequel to “Smoke on the Mountain”) a wholesome musical at 7 p.m. on Saturday at the Dillard Playhouse, in Dillard, Ga. Tickets are $10 for adults and $5 for children under 11. Call 706-212-2500.
  - **Christmas Showhouse** to benefit the Highlands Historical Society 1-5 p.m. each day. The Joe Webb log-house at 149 Satulah Road will be decorated for the holidays by professional and semi-professional decorators. Advance tickets: $15 each at Cyaano’s. Shuttle from Bryson’s.
- **Friday, Dec. 5**
  - **At Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, Dr. Donald B. McCormick,** who is Callaway Professor Emeritus and Chairman of Biochemistry at Emory University in Atlanta, will present a class on vitamins and trace elements at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. The class, which can provide medical professionals with continuing education credit, is open to the general public and will be held from 7:45 to 9 a.m.
  - **Christmas Parade** on the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Smoky Mountain Detachment in a special ceremony. The public is welcome to participate in the gift giving and watch the dancing. Willis Cook from Carneysville, GA, will be the caller. We dance Western Style Square Dancing, mainstream and plus levels. Everyone is welcome. For information call 828-349-0905, 828-349-4167 or 706-762-3943.
  - **The Highlands-Cashiers Players** will present its annual free Christmas reading at 7 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center.

**See EVENTS page 22**

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**Ruby Cinemas**

**Hwy. 441, Franklin • 524-2076**

**Showing Dec. 5-11**

**FOUR CHRISTMASES**

Rated PG-13

- Friday: (4:10), 7:05, 9:10
- Sat & Sun: (2:05), (4:10), 7:05, 9:10

- Mon – Thurs: (4:10), 7:05, 9:10

**TWILIGHT**

Rated PG-13

- Friday: (4:30), 7, 9:30
- Sat & Sun: (2), (4:30), 7, 9:30

- Mon – Thurs: (4:30), 7, 9:30

**BOLT**

Rated PG

- Friday: (4:15), 7:10, 9:15
- Sat & Sun: (2:10), (4:15), 7:10, 9:15

- Mon – Thurs: (4:15), 7:10, 9:15

**QUANTUM OF SOLACE**

Rated PG-13

- Friday: (4:20), 7:15, 9:20
- Sat & Sun: (2:15), (4:20), 7:15, 9:20

- Mon – Thurs: (4:20), 7:15, 9:20

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3-PIECE BEDROOM SET – Oak veneer, one dresser, one desk, one chest. $300. Call 526-5772.

STONE AVAILABLE – Assorted. 14 pallets. $200 per pallet. Call 526-9532


BEAUTIFUL, KNOTTY PINE WOODENTERTAINMENT CENTER WITH POCKET DOORS. Will hold up to a 31" TV. $100. Call 369-5863.

TWO 19" PORTABLE TELEVISION SETS. Perfect for rentals or spare rooms. $20 each. Call 369-5863.

ANTIQUE WOODEN ROCKING CHAIR FROM LATE 1800’S. Fully refinished. $100. Call 369-5863.

AVON CAPE COD RED GLASS – 8 piece place setting. 64 pieces. $385. Also, accessory pieces available. Call 828-524-3614.

SET OF 4 ORIGIAL RIM/ TIRES FROM TOYOTA SOLARA – 16" x 5 1/2 with mounted Bridgestone Potenza tires 225-60-R16 M&S. $500. Call Wolfgang at 526-8389 or 526-4603, evenings.

ANTIQUE WALNUT DINING TABLE with two 10 1/2 inch leaves, $250; six oak pressed back chairs. Very good condition. $300. Whirlpool upright freezer, $100; 80,000 BTU propane central heat unit, $100 and 60-gallon propane hot water heater, $75. Call 526-0036 or 421-1159.

ANTIQUE DINING TABLE with two 10 1/2 inch leaves, $250; six oak pressed back chairs. Very good condition. $300. Whirlpool upright freezer, $100; 80,000 BTU propane central heat unit, $100 and 60-gallon propane hot water heater, $75. Call 526-0036 or 421-1159.

ANTIQUE TURKISH NEEDLE CASE, with large heavy duty plastic holding tank. Was $75. Now $50. Call Randy at 828-488-2193.

PLASTIC OUTDOOR TABLE. Hunter green, $36 x 36" in like new condition. $10. Call Randy at 828-488-2193.


DRESSING ROOM – $5. Call 526-5367.

STEEL TYPEWRITER TABLE – $5. Call 526-5367.

TWO TWIN CREAM COLORED BEDSPREADS – $6 each. Call 526-5367.


TWO ELECTRIC WATER HEATERS for sale. Approximately 38” tall x 12” square. Put bottled water on top. $50 each. OBO. Call 526-3262.

7 JIM SHORE LAMPS BY ENESCO – Worth $750. OBO. Call 526-5367.

LENOX SPICE JARS, full set mint condition, original price $45 each. Also jewelry call 369-0492. 7-9 p.m.

GEISHA GIRL, NIPPON TEAPOT – rattan balls handle circa 1891-1921. Creamer/Covered Sugars. $36-0498 7-9 p.m.

GREEN PRINT VELVET SWIVEL ROCKER, new, $250. blue stripe chair club wotoman, like new, $175; large pine armoire, like new, $200; Simms X-large waders w/attached boots, bought at Highland Hiker, used 3 times, $250. Call Beatrice or Dennis at 743-5600.


THREE "HOUSE OF DENMARK" BOOKCASES – walnut, 3 x 6", containing TV, tape player, turntable, radio/CD. Sold as an entertainment unit including 2 Advent speakers. $550. Call 526-9273.

MISC. ITEMS – Various proof coin sets, old 78 LP, Old Walt Disney movies (never opened); Girls’ bicycle; Collectible Basketball Cards (never opened). Call 526-9123.

MASSEY FERGUSON DIESEL DELUXE 35 WITH POWER STEERING. Completely rebuilt, repaired, new tires. Includes scrape blade, and an 8,000 lbs. tandem axle trailer. Sharp Package! $6,000. Call (828)526-1684 and leave message.

BEAMS, FLOORING AND ENTIRE STRUCTURES: HAND HEWN BEAMS, Beautiful material, large faces, $3.50-$4.50 per board foot. Wormy white oak flooring (milled w/ a t&g), 6-12" widths, $8 per ft. Original, claimed white and yellow pine flooring, random wide widths (6-16”) $6/bd ft. Wide side molding, 3/8. Also historic log cabins and barns ready to reassemble. 215-529-7637. Delivery available.

ANTIQUE CHERRY DINING TABLE – drop-leaf, rope carved legs. Seats 4-10 people. $1,500 each. 828-787-1515.

DELUXE VENTED GAS heater high btu, slightly under. $100. 524-6038.


ANTIQUE BEAMS, FLOORING AND STRUCTURES: Hand hewn beams in oak and yellow pine. Beautiful material, large faces, $3.50-$4.50 per board foot. Original, claimed white and yellow pine flooring, random wide widths (6-16”) $6/bd ft. Also selling entire log and timber frame structures. (www.jcowoodworking.info)

Vehicles for Sale

2002 TOYOTA CAMRY – 7 upgrades, low mileage, excellent condition, priced to sell. $9,500 or OBO. 706-746-1211.

1997 FORD F250 CREW CAB – 4WD, 75,000 original miles. 460 C 8, 5 SP, Short WB, Black, one owner. 35” tires. 3” lift. Headers. Good condition. $8,900. OBO. Call 526-3824.

1984 JEEP CJ7 – Rebuilt 304. 10,000 miles. 8 CY, 4 SP, 4WD, Front Bush Guard. 35” tires. 6” lift. Headers. Good condition. $8,900. OBO. Call 526-3824.

20 DUTCHMEN 27’ LITE TRAVEL TRAILER – Slidout. Queen MBR, sleeps 6. $12,000. OBO. Call 526-3824.

15-FT. DUAL AXLE TRAILER FOR HAULING TRACTORS – Worth $750. OBO. Call 526-3824.

Services

HANDYMAN SPECIAL – Repairs and remodeling, Electrical and Plumbing, Carpentry and more. Low prices. For free estimate call 828-342-8746.

RELIABLE CHILD CARE IN MY HOME – Minutes from Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Daily/Weekly. 12 years experience, references and Early Childhood credentials. $5 per hour for first child, $10 a day for second child. 743-2672.

CUSTOM TILE AND SLATE INSTALLATION. Call 526-4889. 1/21

HOUSE & PET SITTING. – References

available. Call 443-315-9547. 1/17

DESIGNATED DRIVER – Available now through Jan. 1. Call 526-3824.

HOUSEKEEPING – Saturday and Sunday mornings. Call Kim at 828-482-2105.

LANDSCAPE CLEANUP – leafs, gutters and more. Call Juan at 200-9249 or 526-8525.

COMPLETE LAWN SERVICE – All Levels of Lawn Care at Competitive Rates. Design, Installation, & Maintenance. No Job Too Small or Too Large. 30 Years Experience. For Free Quotes, References, or Scheduling please call 526-1684.

CLOCK REPAIR: Antique or modern, complicated antique clocks are my specialty. Experienced and dependable with housecalls available. Call 706-754-9631 or visit my website at www.oldclockrepair.com.


J&J LAWN AND LANDSCAPING SERVICES – Total lawn care and landscaping contracts. 20 years serving Highlands area. 828-526-2251.

SHIPPING SERVICES – STORK’S WRAP, PACK & SHIP UPS Ground & Next Day air services and large furniture shipping available. Packages for sales and/or supplies. Gift wrapping and tax services. 323 Hwy 107 N., Cashiers, NC (1/2 mile from crossroads) (828) 743-3222.

... MACKEY continued from page 1

the Persian Gulf.

We had to get U.S. troops out of Saudi Arabia because the Saudis are having to protect themselves from their own population which is mad about having U.S. troops there. We still have air bases there in the case of an emergency so we could get troops back in there if we need to, but it's the time factor. Where we had most of our military presence is Katar which is very small. I mean, it's tiny and that makes us very nervous with good reason.

All of this is why we have to figure out how to internationalize the protection of the Persian Gulf so it's not just about the United States. Because if nothing else, we have to have territory on which to base equipment so if we do have to go in there suddenly, troops won’t have to be brought in from the U.S. or Europe.

All right. We have reached a point when we have to figure out the best way for us to be connected.

Question 2

The author of “Three Cups of Tea” is adamant about solving the problem of ignorance through education and sees that as the solution to everything.

That's an interesting book. What the author is saying is that General Petraus is being taken out of Iraq and put in charge of Central Command which is in charge of the entire region. Petraus is focused on counter insurgency. The army now is focusing on counter insurgency — and that is something I'm doing right now — training people in counter insurgency tactics. Counter insurgency is how you deal with events on the ground — the culture and political tensions that are going on, and how you figure out who's who in the whole thing. The feeling right now is that a "surge" in Afghanistan isn't the way to go there. The way to go is to really go in and concentrate on counter insurgency. That's what I was talking about earlier — giving the heroin farmers in Afghanistan a different way to earn income to keep them from dealing with people you really don't want them cooperating with. This really requires a different military response than America is used to. And frankly, the American army is being retrained to not fight wars but to do counter insurgency.

Question 3

How far will Israel allow Iran to go with its nuclear development?

This is a real problem. One of the things that we have to be very concerned about is what is going on in domestic politics in Israel. The Israelis for a long time were split right down the middle between those who want to expand their borders in Israel into the occupied territories that are supposed to go to Palestine for a State — which is the basis of the two-state solution — and the group that doesn't.

The Likud party that wants to expand doesn't want to give up any of that territory up but instead wants to incorporate it into greater Israel. They are the people who send the settlers into the occupied territories and establish communities and then connect them together because the theory is when they get a critical mass on that area they can take it over.

The other Israelis — the Kadima party — are saying that's not the way to go. They want an agreement with the Palestinians because if they don't have one the Israelis are going to be outnumbered in a relatively short time — say 10-20 years.

Unfortunately, the extreme Zionists are getting more and more political power and the Israelis are saying that we think of from Exodus and the '67 war and forth — they're leaving.

So there is right now a political period in Israel in which a new leader of the Kadima party is trying to put together a new government. If she can do that, then Israel will likely follow down the path of the peace process. If she fails, there will be elections early in 2009 and in all probability Benjamin Netanyahu will win that election. He is an extreme Zionist and people around him are perfectly willing to use Israeli nuclear weapons if they feel like they need to.

A recent study of the Israelis' likeness to attack Iran released from the American Enterprise Institute — the rest of the NeoCons — says that it's estimated that Iran's facilities are so scattered and so buried in the mountains it would take a minimum of 1,000 Sorties to even damage them and the Israelis wouldn't be able to finish the job.

Their plan, therefore, is for the U.S. to go in and finish the job.

People we have reached a point when we have to accept the fact that Israel is a nation state. It isn't the Holy Land of the Bible. There are times when American national interests and Israeli national interests run parallel but there are times when they don't.

We have one administration after another — republican, democrat — saying that Israel is our greatest ally and we are committed to the defense of Israel. This is fine, but we also have to be willing to draw limits around what we are willing to do. The U.S. has never been willing to do that. We have allowed the tail to wag the dog and that's got to change.

Question 4

What are the implications if the U.S. had no presence in the Middle East?

The U.S. is a global power and we need to stay a global power, but we also need to make sure we are working in concert with other countries.

Cold war diplomacy was easy. There were the white hats and the black hats, now it's much more complicated because power is more dispersed and we are more interconnected.

Obviously, this is an absolute vital region due to the oil and the geography — it is the literal land bridge from Asia to Europe — so we have to be in there. But we have to figure out the best way for us to be there so it benefits us and the people of the region and not be there in a way that is causing tension and hostilities that come back on us in negative ways.

• Next week in the final part of this series, Mackey will answer Questions 5-10.
Brigman asked the board to support a resolution seeking relief from NC GS 115c-83.2 and establishing a common calendar for the benefit of the seven school districts serving the six far western counties of North Carolina including the Qualla Boundary, and Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Jackson, Macon and Swain counties, to align with SCC, WCU and Tri-county Community College.

A common calendar will include such things as a semester start and end dates, school breaks, holidays and professional development days so districts can reach shared goals of improving access to education and facilitating student success, and share resources to reduce costs, while building bridges from K-12 to higher education.

“The vitality of the 21st century economy is dependent upon a well-educated and technically trained workforce best sought through an integrated and seamless K-16 learning experience,” reads the resolution.

“Currently, North Carolina, through legislative action, imposes numerous restrictions and requirements on school calendars including start and ending dates, the number of workdays each year, where a number of the workdays can occur within the calendar, and other requirements,” said Brigman.

“Such restrictions within our calendar have created barriers for student programs such as timely access to dual enrollment classes, Early College schedule conflicts, and other issues pertaining to misalignment for class starts and finishes. As it is now, class alignments are off by two-three weeks.”

Brigman said so far there has been no research substantiating an economic boom to the economy in Eastern or Western NC due to the calendar change, which was the initial reason for the calendar change three years ago.

“Earlier this month, other superintendents and representatives from SCC, WCU and Tri-County discussed the hardships of aligning our schedule to adequately address the needs of our students. The group unanimously agreed to submit a request in the form of a resolution to be supported by each of our boards for a joint calendar waiver,” he said.

“This will help remove most of the barriers this legislation presents as we continue to address other state requirements for high school reform and expanded course offerings to all students.”

The board voted unanimously to approve the resolution and join the other K-12 and higher education partners in the Western North Carolina region in the endeavor.

The resolutions will be presented to the State Board of Education and legislators as soon as possible in hopes of adjusting the current draft calendar being developed for 2009-10.

This week Brigman and others also met with Representative Haire, Senator Snow and Representative West to demonstrate a unified front in hopes of getting the waiver.

If the state allows the waiver, Macon County schools would start around Aug. 15, 2009 with the first semester ending before Christmas. – KL
New MC Commission board is seated Dec. 1

The torch was passed at Monday night’s Macon County Commission meeting.

Democrat Bobby Kuppers took the seat of outgoing Republican commission chair Charlie Leatherman whose eight-year tenure came to an end; Commissioner David Sir retained his seat.

Judge James U. Downs conducted the swearing in ceremony Monday night in the commission boardroom. Both Commissioners Jim Davis and Bobby Kuppers were joined by their wives who each held their personal bibles.

“Never feel intimidated when you stand at the podium to speak to the board,” he said. “Feel like you are standing in your living room because you have a right to speak and a right to be here.”

The board quickly elected a chair and vice-chair with Commissioner Bobby Kuppers nominating Commissioner Ronnie Beale chairman which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Bob Simpson nominated Brian McClellan vice-chair but the motion failed for lack of a second.

The public is invited.

The Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival’s Christmas concert “Father Christmas’ Favorite Chamber Music” at 5 p.m. at PAC to benefit the Highlands Emergency Council. For tickets call 526-9060.

Friday & Sunday, Dec. 19 & 21
• Cullasaja Assembly of God invites you and your family to its Christmas Play, “A Word of Wisdom.” The play will be on Friday at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 6:30 p.m. The play is free.

Saturday, Dec. 20
• NANTAHALA HIKING CLUB will take a 2.5 easy-to-moderate hike on the Bartram Trail from Wallace Branch and return loop. Meet in Franklin at Westgate Plaza at 2 p.m. Drive 3 miles round trip. Bring water, a snack if you wish, wear sturdy shoes. Hikes are limited to 20.

Photos by Kim Lewicki

Gary Dills of the MC Republican party, presented outgoing commissioner Charlie Leatherman with an elephant model representing the Republican party.

Commissioner Ronnie Beale presented Leatherman with a plaque and thanked him for a job well done over the last eight years.

MEADOWS
MOUNTAIN REALTY
Contact us at 866-526-3558
for more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

• UPON EVENTS •

• Artwalk: First Friday at 6 p.m. at the Art in the Park Gallery.

• Wine Tastings at Old Edwards Inn & Spa. Sumptuous hors d’oeuvres amid festive fireside ambiance of Hummingbird Piano Bar in the inn. 2-4 p.m. $20 applies to purchase if you choose to buy and not just taste! Call 526-8008.

• Santa will be at the Highlands Visitor Center from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. to hear wishes and for photos.

• NANTAHALA HIKING CLUB will take a moderate to strenuous 9.5 mile hike with elevation change of 300 feet, from Deep Gap to Raven Rock on the Appalachian Trail. Meet in Franklin at Westgate Plaza (opposite Burger King); drive 40 miles round trip. Call leader Don D’Neal, (828) 566-5723, for meeting time and reservations. Bring water, lunch; wear sturdy shoes. Visitors are welcome, but no pets please.

• The Highlands Plateau Greenway will have a trail construction work trip on Saturday. If you are interested in participating please register with Hillrie Quin at 526-2385 or hjquin@verizon.net. We will meet at the Peggy Crosby Room, hosted by the Friends of the Albert Carlton – Cashiers Community Library at 9 a.m. for a brief training session and then car pool to a trail section. Participants will be furnished tools and safety equipment. Bring water, lunch, rain gear, a day-pack to hold everything. Boots and clothes that can get dirty are advised.

• Refuge Christmas Party at Cullasaja Assembly of God Sunday at 6:30 pm downstairs. Cullasaja Assembly of God is located at 6201 Highlands Rd. next to Exxon. For more information call Matt Woodroof - 828-369-7540- ext.203 www.cullasaja.org

Thursday, Dec. 18
• Christmas Sing-A-Long and family movie will begin at 6 p.m. at the Cashiers Library. Details will be announced later.

Friday & Sunday, Dec. 19 & 21
• Cullasaja Assembly of God invites you and your family to its Christmas Play, “A Word of Wisdom.” The play will be on Friday at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 6:30 p.m. The play is free. Cullasaja Assembly is located at 6201 Highlands Rd. next to Exxon. For more information call the church office at 828-369-7540. www.cullasaja.org
**PseudoCube©**

#AZ3F Level of Difficulty - Hard

**THE SETUP:**
The cube has 27 consecutive numbers in it, arranged in three layers with 9 numbers each. These numbers are arranged in a special pattern: For each layer, the sum of the three numbers in each row, column or diagonal is 3 times its center number. Eight diagonals connect all three layers by running through the center number of the middle layer. Each diagonal contains 3 numbers equaling the total of the three center numbers. One of the diagonals is shown with circles.

**THE CHALLENGE:**
Start with the three center numbers for each layer and the other numbers given. Now pour a cup of coffee, pick up a pencil and eraser and try to figure out where the other numbers belong. Good Luck!

Email: pseudocube8@aol.com.

Solution to #AZ3F in Nov. 26 issue

**Sudo-Grams© 2008**
by Pete Sarjeant and Don Cook

**OBJECT:**
A mystery word or phrase using all different letters is designated by circled squares (other short words will appear when solving, for which a list of meanings is provided). Every puzzle has a different mystery word or phrase (no spaces). Assign different letters to each square of each column and row. In addition, various cells (six, eight or nine) in the puzzle layout have the same different letters (this is like Sudoku but uses letters instead of numbers).

**How to Solve:**
Determine the different letters among those given. Write in the mystery word using the clue and these letters. Other small words will appear in the puzzle. As in conventional crossword puzzles, a list of meanings for these Across/Down words is given and number positions shown. Doing them will speed up your solution to the puzzle. Using your powers of induction, inference and insight, place missing letters in blank squares according to the rules noted above. Focus your attention where the least number of letters are needed to complete a line, column or cell.

**Mystery Word**
#G607

**To Proceed (6)**

**Crossword Solution 11/26**

**Fire Dept. Entries**

The following are the Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries for the week of Nov. 26-Dec. 3

**Nov. 26**
- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Hicks Road. The victim was transported to the hospital. Nov. 27
- The dept. responded to an alarm at a residence on Bowery Road. It was cancelled by the alarm company.
- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Rolling Woods Road. The victim was transported to the hospital. Nov. 30
- The dept. responded to the call of an accident on N.C. 106 but it was unfounded. Dec. 1
- The dept. responded to an accident on Buck Creek Road where a vehicle was down the bank. There were no injuries.
- The dept. responded to an accident on Buck Creek and Shortoff Baptist Church where a vehicle had overturned. There were no injuries.
- The dept. provided mutual aid to Cashiers for a possible structure fire but it was cancelled on route.

**Note:**
- At the Tuesday, Dec. 2 Fire Department meeting, the 2009 officer election was held. Elected were: Chief: James Manley; Asst. Chief: Ricky Bryson; Captain: Roger L. Wilson; Lt: Trevor Gilson; 2nd Lt: Lenny Metrick; Rescue Capt: Jimmy Tate; Rescue Lt: Eric Pierson; Treasurer: Terry Watson; Secretary: Wayne Henry; Chaplain: Buddy Miller.

**Solution to Nov. 27 Sudo-Grams**

**CROSSWORD SOLUTION 11/26**

**... BOARD from page 22**

Commissioner McClellan nominated Jim Davis vice-chair which was seconded by Beale. The motion passed 4 to 1. Simpson voted nay.

Business done, various groups presented Leatherman with tokens of appreciation including the Board of Commissioners and county employees, the Republican party, the Academic Foundation and the American Legion Post 108 and VFW post 7339.

Joey Curtis, with the Academic Foundation, announced that ever since the commission agreed to fund a teacher supplement, teacher and commissioner Charlie Leatherman has given his supplement to the foundation. “I hope this is a tradition that will continue,” said Leatherman to Kuppers, who is a teacher at Franklin High School.

Teachers who need funding for various projects can apply to the foundation for money.

During his outgoing speech, Leatherman said he was proud to be leaving Macon County in better shape than when he came on board eight years ago.

Each commissioner had kind, parting words saying though they didn’t always agree with Leatherman, they knew he had the good of Macon County at heart as the basis of every decision he ever made. The next Macon County Commission meeting is Monday, Dec. 8 at 6 p.m. – KL