Town wins ETJ rep case, again

On Dec. 18, 2007, The N.C. Court of Appeals upheld the judgment of Judge Dennis J. Winner in the Macon County Superior Court and the petition heard by the Court of Appeals on Aug. 23, 2007 – that the town properly determined the proportion of ETJ representatives on its Planning and Zoning boards.

The county contended that the trial court erred by granting the town's motion for summary judgment because there were genuine controversies as to the meaning of the word "population" in the N.C. Gen. Stat. 160A-362 and the town didn't comply with the statute when it adopted amendments to its extraterritorial jurisdiction ordinance.

“We disagree and affirm the judgment of the trial court that,” the Court of Appeals concluded. • See ETJ page 14

First snow fall of 2008

2007 ended with unseasonably warm weather but by nightfall on Jan. 1, 2008 the temperature was dropping and around 8 p.m. snow began to fall. By the morning of Jan. 2, about two inches of dry powder covered the plateau accompanied by arctic weather with a low of 4 degrees and a high of 10 degrees for the day. Above Mirror Lake canoes nestle under the snow. Photo by Jim Lewicki

Pollsters predict Western NC voters

By Tom Jensen

John Edwards and Mike Huckabee are the most popular Presidential candidates in their own parties in western North Carolina, according to recent surveys conducted by Raleigh’s Public Policy Polling. But Rudy Giuliani is the most popular candidate with the public at large in WNC.

Public Policy Polling has conducted monthly polls in 2007 about the various statewide races we will have in North Carolina next year. One of the ways we analyze our results is by region, so as we enter 2008 it seems worth taking a look at the attitudes of WNC voters about next year's candidates.

On the Democratic side, John Edwards has been more popular with his home state voters in western North Carolina than any other region of the state. Hillary Clinton has led in many state wide polls of Democrats, but Edwards has led in the mountains nearly every month, most recently leading Clinton.

See VOTERS page 11

Students learn ‘spit' tobacco far from ‘cool’

By Sally Hansen

On Dec. 4, Macon County students saw up close and personal real-life disastrous affects spit tobacco can have on their lives.

Students at Macon Middle School (MMS) and Franklin High School (FHS) had the opportunity to see a presentation by oral cancer survivor Gruen Von Behrens on the dangers of spit tobacco use. The presentation was made possible by a grant from the North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund, which funds programs that promote preventive health.

Von Behrens is now 29 years old, but he began using spit tobacco when he was 13 years old. Four years later he was diagnosed with oral cancer. To date, Von Behrens has had 34 surgeries on his face and neck. His medical bills are estimated to have been between $2.5 and $3 million.

Von Behrens made three presentations during his time in Macon County. One of these was for 7th and 8th grade students at MMS and the other two included FHS students, students from the Early College High School, students from Union Academy and around 40 community leaders.

See TOBACCO page 14
‘Oneness’ theory questioned

Dear Editor:

In a recent “Reflections from Turtle Pond” Katie Brugger expounded on her beliefs on the “oneness” of the universe. In the same article she mentioned a book she and her husband wrote entitled The Game of God. I would like to make a response.

The book The Game of God is a 300-page explanation of the authors’ belief system, complete with visual aids. The title of the introduction is: “Why we need to forgive God,” and is available for reading on www.gameofgod.com.

As a Christian, the thought of God justifying himself to me makes me uncomfortable. Nonetheless, I trudged on. The authors dedicate a small portion of the beginning of the book rejecting and vilifying the god that would knowingly create a universe filled with suffering inhabitants; they then spend the remainder of the book building a case for a god that knowingly created a universe filled with suffering inhabitants. Although I’m not sure who it is that supposedly believes in the aforementioned rejected god, one can only assume that it is intended to be a caricature of the God of the Bible, but it is this god that needs our forgiveness. They then state their intentions of proposing a theory of “Creator and creation as one. The universe, we will assert, is a Game of God. We hold that this model allows us to absolutely forgive, and thus absolutely love, God.”

This world view presents itself as the answer to questions other religions have failed to answer. Really! I have heard it said that for any belief system to have validity, it must give coherent answers to four fundamental questions. These are questions of origin, meaning, morality, and destiny. So, does the theoretical model given to us in The Game of God provide these answers?

What of the question of origin? The theoretical god came to the conclusion that to be truly unlimited, one must experience ultimate limitation. To accomplish this goal of experiencing limitation, this god decided to place itself into a state of self-induced amnesia at the very instant of the Big Bang. The entire universe is thus made up of this forgetful creator and is in a constant process of “re-awakening.”

First of all, I disagree with the concept of having to experience something in order to have knowledge of it. After all, it is possible to have knowledge of suicide without ever having experienced it. Secondly, would the revelation of needing to experience limitation not mean that this god has spent eternity past as an incomplete deity?

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First of all, I disagree with the concept of having to experience something in order to have knowledge of it. After all, it is possible to have knowledge of suicide without ever having experienced it. Secondly, would the revelation of needing to experience limitation not mean that this god has spent eternity past as an incomplete deity?
Dane David Morgan Sr.

Dane David Morgan Sr., 95, of Highlands, N.C. and Naples, FL, died December 10, 2007 at his home in Naples with beloved wife, Georgia at his side. They were married for 16 years. Dane was preceded in death by his first wife, Mary Elizabeth Smith, “Lib,” the mother of his three sons.

An architect by vocation, a painter by avocation, he studied at Carnegie Mellon, Illinois Institute of Technology, including Bauhaus staff under Mies van der Rohe. He founded his own firm, Dane D. Morgan and Associates in Burlington, IA. AIA registered in six states, he worked for 30 years across the Midwest building schools and hospitals. He finished with a hospital project in Liberia.

He continued to study upon retirement with master watercolorists at the Instituto San Miguel D’Allende in Mexico and with Robert Wood, James Cooper, Miles Batt, Millard Wells and Gerald Brommer. Dane was an active member of the Florida Water Color Society, Miami Water Color Society, Ocean Reef Club Art League, Florida Keys Water Color Society, Naples Art League, Homestead Art League and Highlands Art League. His own works won more than a few prizes.

A great love of his was the “Studio Alive,” a group of artists who painted together weekly in his home studio in Highlands. They worked from 1983 on, until blindness forced him to stop.

Another love was water. Dane roamed the Mississippi River, the Great Lakes, the Atlantic Coast, the Florida Keys and the Bahamas. He served as commodore at the Ocean Reef Yacht Club and with its busy Coast Guard Auxiliary. His paintings grace many homes there.

He is survived by his wife, Georgia; and children of both, Stephan and Dianne Morgan of Santa Fe, N.M., and daughter, Dawn and child, Kate; Michael and Sandy Morgan of Minneapolis, MN and daughters, Susan and Ellie; Dane Jr. and Alice Morgan of Brookline, MA and son, Dane III and daughter, Anne and child, Amelia; Roy and Jackie Cronacher and their daughter, Carin Ashley and son, Roy Cronacher III; Patricia Cronacher-Travers and family; Scott and Audrey Cronacher. A service for immediate family only was held soon in Naples and a celebration of Dane’s life for family and friends in Highlands in August.

In lieu of flowers, please consider the following who helped greatly, Highlands-Cashiers Hospice, 190 Hospital Drive, Highlands, NC 28741 or Avow Hospice, 1095 Whippoorwill Lane, Naples, FL, 34105.

John Henry Nix

John Henry Nix, age 89, of Lonesome Valley Road Cashiers, NC died Tuesday, December 18, 2007 at his residence. He was born in Oconee, SC, the son of Emma Nix. He was married to Dora Stewart who died in 2005. He retired from Jennings Builders Supply with 53 years of service. He was a member of Cashiers Baptist Church. Mr. Nix was an avid boat hunter.

He is survived by three daughters, Shirley Chastain of Sevierville, TN, Glenda Moss and husband, Junior of Cashiers, NC and Thyras Chapman and husband, Lester of Lake Toxaway, NC; one special son, Dickie Jennings of Cashiers, N.C.; two sisters, Lillie Mae Monroe of Piedmont, S.C. and Mae Bell Mathis of Easley, S.C.; one brother, Clarence Murphy of Georgia; a special caregiver, Teresa Davis. Eighteen grandchildren, 34 great-grandchildren and eight great-great-grandchildren also survive. He was preceded in death by one son, Dale Nix, one son-in-law, James Chastain, four sisters, five brothers and one grandson, Eddie Moss.

Funeral services were held Friday, December 21 at 2 p.m. at the Cashiers Baptist Church with Rev. Johnny Norris, Rev. Walter Wilson, and Rev. Scotty Patrick officiating. Burial was at Stewart Cemetery. Russell Messer, Rob Herstek, Jimmy McColl, Tracy Nelson, Ricky Morgan and Darren Stiwinter served as pallbearers. Honorary pallbearers will be employees of Jennings Builders Supply.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the West Care Hospice of Jackson County. Bryant Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

Vicki Gould Sawyer

Vicki Gould Sawyer died Tuesday, December 18, 2007. She was born in Brookville, Pa., April 1, 1946. Vicki is survived by her husband of 40 years, Tom Sawyer, son, Tom Sawyer II and his wife Kim and grandchildren, Tommy III and Marissa of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., daughter, Jenny Callahan and her husband Steve of Cashiers, her parents, William and Millicent Gould of Jupiter, Fla.

Vicki and Tom came to the area in 1976 and spent every summer here. Their lifelong dream was to relocate to Cashiers/Glenville from Florida, which they did in 1998. She started Miss Vicki's Holiday Fixin's and Mountain Party Tents and Events. Vicki was very active in her church, Grace Community of Cashiers as well as Rotary and many other community programs. She was a wonderful mother and great friend to many.

She fought cancer bravely with an incredible strength and positive attitude for five years, never giving up. Vicki is now with our Lord, where there is no cancer or sickness. She will be greatly missed.

A memorial service was held at Community Bible Church in Highlands on Saturday, December 22 at 2 p.m. In lieu of flowers, gifts may be sent to Grace Community Church for Vicki’s Victors and the American Cancer Society. Bryant Funeral Home handled the arrangements.

G.W. “Doc” Meadows

G.W. “Doc” Meadows, age 73, of State Road 1 158, Glenville, N.C., died Wednesday, December 19, 2007 at a Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. He was born in Pine Bluff, AR, the son of the late Gaylord W. Meadows, Sr. and Nellie Finney Meadows. He was a veteran of the US Army and was a structural designer. He was a loving father, grandfather, loved the outdoors, and was an avid story teller. He was a member of Hamburg Baptist Church.

He is survived by his daughter, Sheryl Rene' Krasnokutsky of Sapphire, N.C.; two sons, Mark Randall Meadows and his wife, Debbie of Cashiers, N.C. and Timothy Scott Meadows and his wife, Marlena of Athens, GA; seven grandchildren, Blake, Haley, Naomi, Josiah, Lydia, and Abigail Meadows and Robert Krasnokutsky.

Funeral services were held Sunday, December 23 at 2:30 p.m. at Hubbard Baptist Church with Rev. Matt Ledbetter officiating. Burial was in the Church Cemetery. Mark Meadows, Scott Meadows, Blake Meadows, Eric Shomaker, Kyle McKim and Jessie Franks served as pallbearers.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Hubbard Baptist Church Building Fund, 4673 Hwy 107 N, Glenville, NC 28736. Bryant Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.
**MY 2008 predictions**

(You had better sit down!)

W

ell, it's 2008 and I'm excited, how 'bout you? I'm excited because I made it through 2007 without getting fired or strangled by a reader and my health is holding...for now. For a guy born a decade before black and white TV became commonplace, that's a biggie.

It's also time for me to look at my crystal ball and make my predictions for 2008. No, crystal ball is not make my predictions for a guy born a decade before black and white TV.

Where is Highlands, anyway? Where is the sister of Lucille Ball but if you know her then you have also watched black and white TV.

Here goes:

Prairies will vandalize the front of the Methodist church by throwing expensive glass Christmas ornaments at the building. A small note inside one of the broken ornaments will read, "Behold! No good will come from this!"

During a January commission meeting, Larry Rogers will look Hank Ross square in the eye and say, "Ya ain't from 'round here, are ya?"

Bonny & Billy Gibson of Macon, GA, will join with CLE and teach proper English to Mexicans, "Y'all come now, ya hear!"

Local attorney Lenny Baer will publish a book titled "Learning Bridge My Way" and then form a club focused on kicking all the good players out of Highlands.

The judge who will eventually hear the Larry and Michael Gantenbein illegal drug trafficking case is still in law school.

Local attorney Larry Rogers will meet at a secret location and agree to recalibrate their altimeters to 500 feet higher than they really are. Everyone will be shocked to find most Realtors had already done that so they will agree to recalibrate at 1,000 feet.

Do flatlanders know anyhow?

In February, our honorable Mayor, Don Mullen, will put on a happy face and agree to everything voted on by the new Town Board. He will be trained at the Buck School of Agreement and Happy Face.

Local churches in Highlands will learn that television was originally invented by a Mormon named Philo T. Farnsworth. They will ban television from all Christian homes and issue a fatwa, proclaiming "Be leery of people named Philo." Next, they will ban all recipes containing "philo dough" thinking the recipe is the title of their first class.

Larry Rogers will look Hank Ross square in the eye and say, "Ya ain't from 'round here, are ya?"

The Town Board will unanimously put the beautiful Pine Street Park project to the back of the building. They will redo the bathrooms and bolt a single wide trailer next year. And yes, you are right in suggesting employees stop chewing their nails.

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A group of surveyors, pouring over old maps and surveys, will determine that Highlands is actually located in Rabun County.

As the two-hour parking restrictions will be strengthened to 8-hour parking restrictions and only enforced between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. daily, Sundays included. Hmmmm!

Larry Rogers and Buz Dotson will compete for the position of Easter Bunny for the Highlands Easter Parade. Hank Ross will protest, stating he is cuter than both those guys. I agree. A small group of persistent Highlanders will march on Main Street with banners that proclaim "Rogers Rabbit for Easter Bunny" giving Larry the edge.

In May, the two-hour parking restrictions will be strengthened to 8-hour parking restrictions and only enforced between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. daily, Sundays included. Hmmmm!

Feedback is encouraged!

email: askfredanything@aol.com
Bhutto's death may rally moderates

The assassination of former Pakistani prime minister and opposition leader Benazir Bhutto came as a shock, but should have been no surprise. This was the second attempt on her life since her return from exile, the first occurred last October. Whatever truth there may have been to charges of corruption against Bhutto and her husband, her death is a tragedy for the already unstable country. Bhutto was the first woman elected to lead a Muslim country, and given the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, it may be centuries before another emerges.

The fact that Bhutto was elected Pakistan's leader not once, but twice, speaks to the secular nature of Pakistan. It remains to be seen if moderate Muslims in her country can stand up to a growing fanatic minority determined to establish an Islamic state similar to Afghanistan under the Taliban.

At the moment, the best hope for stability rests with the continued rule of President Musharraf. There is considerable doubt that he will be able to withstand the tide of fundamentalism. We don't want it. If moderates in Pakistan's government stand up to a growing fanatic minority determined to establish an Islamic state similar to Afghanistan under the Taliban.

At the moment, the best hope for stability rests with the continued rule of President Musharraf. There is considerable doubt that he will be able to withstand the tide of fundamentalism. We don't want it. If moderates in Pakistan's government stand up to a growing fanatic minority determined to establish an Islamic state similar to Afghanistan under the Taliban.

Pakistan's voters would probably opt for a continued secular state, but they lack the passion for democracy that characterizes the western democracies. It is the Pakistanis who are willing to die, and to send others to their deaths. It is the Pakistanis who are willing to kill and be killed to destabilize the government. Riots and demonstrations followed Bhutto's death last week. What is uncertain is the number of Pakistanis willing to risk death to keep alive the ideal of democracy. An element of ambivalence certainly exists; abhorrence for the slaughter of innocent people on the one hand, pride in the success of Muslim domination on the other. I suspect that many moderate Pakistanis harbor pride in the dedication, if not the methods, of the fundamentalists. I remember that no Muslim leader could be found to unconditionally condemn the attacks of September 11, 2001.

Al Qaeda has claimed responsibility for the murder, and it is difficult to imagine a conspiracy between the Islamists and the Musharraf government. Still, complicity by some in the military or government is possible, even likely. Infiltration of the military by militants is a near certainty. Musharraf may well have seen Bhutto as a greater immediate threat to his rule than the more remote radical. If this was his assessment, he may have permitted or encouraged the assassination. Perhaps time will unravel the web of events, perhaps not. Remember, in the freest, most open country in the world, many believe the official explanation of a lone gunman in the murder of President Kennedy. What is undeniable is that Pakistan is more secure than it was a week ago, and that the region and the world are less secure.

The U.S. Forest Service is releasing a pre-decisional Environmental Assessment (EA) of recreation uses on the upper Chattooga River in February. The agency had planned to release the EA this month. "The agency is working diligently to prepare the EA for public review," said Sumter National Forest Supervisor Jerome Thomas. "As anyone familiar with this subject knows, the issues being considered in this EA are wide-ranging and complex; we need additional time to complete our analysis.

The EA will be available for a 30-day comment period in February and will be posted on the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests' web site at http://www.fs.fed.us/8/fms where additional background information can be found as well.

Upper Chattooga River environmental assessment coming in February

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Eschatology

It may be a strange topic to start the new year with, but it's something I have been thinking about for some time now. Eschatology is the branch of theology that is concerned with the end of the world or of humankind, but the word can also mean a belief concerning ultimate or final things, such as the destiny of humanity.

I first started thinking about this last year when I realized that, when pondering the consequences of global warming I was very pessimistic about humanity's chances for survival. I was envisioning end-times, but from an environmental cause, not a religious one.

How could I envision the end of the human race so dispassionately? The more I thought about it, the more clear it became that envisioning end-times is a pretty common human trait.

Of course Christians are an obvious example. Almost as soon as Jesus was dead his disciples were looking for him to return and bring an end to this earthly kingdom. When that didn't happen the belief developed that the millennium spoken of in Revelation meant that Jesus would come again in the year 1000. I once read that just before midnight on Dec. 31, 999 the Pope was lying on his face in front of an altar expecting the end to come at any minute. I wonder how long it took before he gave up. (I was actually disappointed that there wasn't more craziness in the buildup to the second millennium; all we got was the Y2K bug.)

Among many present-day Christians the Rapture is a fondly hoped for event, even though there will be plenty of people left behind as the select are transported to heaven.

Other religions also have their own forms of eschatological theology. Jews and Muslims both believe in a future messianic age, while Hindus and Buddhists believe in cycles of creation and destruction.

People in the new-age community are hoping for a transformative moment that will raise the awareness of everyone on the planet sufficiently to usher in a new age of peace and harmony.

A popular theory is this awakening will happen in the year 2012. This is reputed to be the year that completes the thirteenth cycle in the Long Count of the Mayan calendar (on December 21, to be exact). NASA (not exactly a new-age institution) predicts the Sun will reverse its magnetic poles during 2012. I'm not quite sure how these two things will bring about an awakening, but if you'd like to learn more, there are plenty of websites (for example, www.survive2012.com).

Peter Russell, a British physicist, provides a logical premise for a coming awakening in his book The White Hole In Time (revised version called Waking Up In Time). His premise is that evolution is accelerating; we can see it clearly in the increasing acceleration of technological development. He suggests that we are heading towards an evolutionary singularity, the “white hole in time” which will bring about some kind of extraordinary change.

I have been surprised in conversation with friends to find eschatological thinking is common in the environmental community. These people long for the day when humans have been wiped out by their stupidity and the earth can recover from the effects of our depredations.

I found more examples of end-of-the-worldism in the January 2008 issue of Harper's Magazine, in a review of books on secularism. (“Faith in Reason: Secular fantasies of a godless age,” by John Gray) Mr. Gray describes utopianism and Marxism as philosophies built upon the “millenarian belief anticipating a violent rupture in history that would be followed by a new world”: the old world of greed and strife would be transformed into a new one of equality and cooperation. Mr. Gray cites The End of History and the Last Man, by Francis Fukuyama, as an example of end-time-thinking in the modern political sphere.

Finally, it seems to me that this common belief in the end of time is implicit in the standard middle-aged complaint, “What's wrong with this younger generation?” Every generation seems to think the following one is somehow worse than their own, lazier, less concerned with things of importance (family, religion, etc.), and because of these traits the younger generation is sure to bring about the ruination of the race.

Why is eschatological thinking so common? I asked some people their opinion. One person answered that perhaps the human race collectively works better under pressure, and when we think the world's about to end we're willing to put out a little more effort.
Our disastrous, Canadian future

Far from denigrating Canadians, I begin with high praise for one Canadian. I never miss the byline of Mark Steyn. He is a Canadian, living in New Hampshire, who publishes frequent articles in Canada, in the US, in Great Britain, and in Australia, and elsewhere.

Steyn combines humor, excellent research and powerful logic in articles on politics, philosophy and culture. He would be a lock to win the annual H.L. Mencken Award, except for its requirement that the winners be born in the US. But today's subject centers on his latest best-selling book, “America Alone.”

One chapter in that book, entitled “The Future Belongs to Islam,” was republished in Maclean's magazine, which is the Canadian equivalent to Time magazine. The Canadian Islamic Conference (CIC) filed a complaint against Steyn and Maclean's accusing them of “exposing Canadian Muslims to hatred and Islamophobia.”

CIC is in Canada what the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) is in the US. CAIR has threatened and taken assorted actions in court in the US similar to what CIC has done in Canada. However, CIC's complaint against Steyn and Maclean's is in the Canadian Human Rights Commission (HRC).

Unlike courts, the HRC is staffed by laymen, not judges. Its members tend to be members of assorted groups who are offended on behalf of others, including the small or oppressed. Any group can file complaints against anyone, or any institution, often based on the fact that the group is seeking recognition or better treatment. Laymen represent the groups, not the individuals who are offended. Some judges carry biases on the basis of their personal experiences, but mostly they are members of assorted groups who are offended on behalf of others.

The process here is also similar to that in Canada. In venues from mass demonstrations to complaints in court, representatives of assorted groups claim discrimination. And if they win their cases in court, they claim attorneys fees and costs. Often, they offer witnesses whose careers consist of complaining and gaining money. And last, in many instances, the complaints are made against smaller cities, smaller school boards, or individuals who lack resources to fight back against their accusers.

In this aspect, the complaint against Steyn and Maclean’s is atypical. They have the wherewithal to fight back. They will not fold under pressure regardless of the merits of their case. Many of the cases in the US are brought against financially-weaker defendants, and the defendants' cases are often represented by smaller firms, or individuals who lack resources to fight back against the accusers.

Nowhere in that document does it contain the text of the Constitution. Nowhere in that document does it guarantee each of us freedom from being offended. And people and groups who ride on that idea are not defending American ideals, they are attacking them, especially attacking the Constitution itself.

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The British (well, actually) comedy/drama with elements of message, but no more than you’d want in a comic film. A good mix of the silly and clever, that British film does so well (British actors seem more willing to look silly for the sake of the story than Americans). Great performance by all, but clearly Griffiths show, and it shows a range of her considerable abilities. A great pick for those who dream of performing. A few more British comic gems are Janice Beard, Mrs. Henderson Presents, Widows Peak, Billy Elliot, and the brilliant and hysterical Kinky Boots. These and about 5,000 others are available for sale or rent at Movie Stop Video, stop on by and take a look.

... BRUGGER continued from page 6

Maybe this is how he works best, but I don’t find it a satisfactory answer. Another gave the answer that had first occurred to me, “It’s an easy way to get out of the problems confronting us both personally and collectively.” If I think the human race is already toast from global warming (to quote an eminent scientist, James Lovelock) then why bother doing any of the hard work required to clean up our polluting behavior? If the year of spiritual transformation is quickly approaching and all of us will be changed anyway, then why bother trying to be a better person now? Why not just wait for the easy fix?

My husband once began a song on this topic entitled, “You’re Not Going To Get Out Of It That Easy.” I have come to the conclusion that our end-of-the-world thinking is just another reflection of the fact that life is hard and most of us crave a magical resolution. End-times equal happy-times. As I wrote last Thanksgiving, “It is easy to fall into the trap of seeing life as a burden. We get so busy with work and family and paying bills it’s not surprising so many people believe happiness is only possible by escaping their life — whether it be on vacation or in heaven (a sort of permanent vacation).”
The year in the rear-view mirror.

It was a dark and stormy night, early in 2007, lightning shattered the night sky and thunder rumbled through the darkness. It was as if the Heavens were foreshadowing a disaster of historic proportions. And alas, so it was, for the very next day, Nancy "Dimbulb" Pelosi was named Speaker of the House, and Harry "Dimwit" Reid was chosen to be Senate Majority Leader. From that day forward, the ineptitude became manifest and the embarrassment built to a dizzying nadir to the point that Congress had a lower approval rating than O. J. Simpson.

2007 will be non-remembered as the year of the hair-brained bimboette. Kicked off by Paris Hilton, a succession of young ladies engaged in what would appear to be a competition of downright stupidity. Paris' rap sheet of driving infractions makes one dizzy. In January, she pleaded guilty to an alcohol-related reckless driving charge and was given 36 months probation. No sooner had she exited the courtroom than she was pulled over on a suspended license. No penalty reported. On February 27th, she was caught doing 70 in a 35 zone, again with a suspended license. Oh, and no headlights on at night. Violated probation. Sentenced to jail, Sheriff Lee Baca mysteriously said she could serve 40 days home confinement instead. Evidently, the sentencing judge didn't agree and Paris went to the clinic. Grandpa Baron recently minimized her inheritance. Poor baby.

Lindsay Lohan, after being involved in multiple automobile incidents in 2004-2006, in January checked herself into rehab for the first of three times in 2007.

Her stint in the "Wonderland Center" didn't seem to accomplish the purpose as she was arrested in May for putting her car into a curb while DUI, whereupon the cops found cocaine in the car.

Since the Wonderland experience didn't do the trick, she entered the "Promises" rehabilitation facility in Malibu and stayed for 45 days. Eleven days after leaving Promises, Lindsay was again arrested for DUI, possession and transportation of cocaine and driving while suspended. Off to the "Cirque Lodge" in Sundance, Utah. Oh yeah, that'll work. Enough of her.

On to Britney, the Queen of Morons. The short list of her 2007 problems: she checked into rehab before she checked out a few hours later; shaved off her hair; another rehab, in and out and back in; attacked reporters with an umbrella; ran over somebody's feet, charged with hit-and-run; left the house without her pants; all this while carrying on a custody battle with her ex (? is he ex yet?).

So, how is Brit's sister, Jamie Lynn, going to compete with all that? By getting her 16-year-old self pregnant, that's how. The Nickelodeon star is now setting the example to young girls as to how one achieves notoriety, which seems to be their goal in life. A disaster to our society, just when we didn't need another.

On January 10th, President Bush announced a change of strategy in the Iraq war.

The Surge, which required the addition of 20,000+ troops to be inserted into the war zone, was met by fierce opposition by liberal leaders, calling it a failure before it had, for all practical purposes, begun. Now that even reporters and liberals have admitted that it is a success in making, and the American body count is down (to their dismay), establishing an end-date certain seems to have lost its luster.

Not that it came as a great surprise, but the fact still chilled one to the bone. On January 20th, the Hilldabeast announced the formation of a presidential exploratory committee. To make matters worse, even though Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina are extremely close, she holds commanding leads in Michigan and Florida, each state having more delegates than the other three combined. Nationally, she leads big. If, by some horrible twist of fate, she becomes president (shudder), you can forget about the U.S. continuing to be a world power. If she has a cooperative Congress, she will finish us in her first term.

Good grief, we're not out of January's events, and the year is almost over.

2007 seems to be a year of dissatisfaction, displeasure with government. (Bush 35%, Congress 25%), the economy (recession ahead? - I doubt it), education (a disaster), the fabric of our society being torn by rampant immorality, moral bankruptcy, abortion... Don, I thought conservatives were supposed to be optimistic, seeing the glass half full. This is a time that tries men's souls. We have been through gloomy times before and God has mercifully pulled us out of the muck. Pray He will again.

Don Swanson
Feedback is encouraged. Email swansonon@dhnet.net

Burning ban partially lifted

The Macon County Fire Marshal's office and the North Carolina Division of Forest Resources have lifted the burning ban in Macon County for fires located within 100 feet of an occupied dwelling. Questions should be directed to the fire marshal's office at 828-349-2067 or the N.C. Division of Forest Resources at 828-369-8677. The burning ban may be reinstated if dry conditions persist.
AGENDA

Note:
Due to the inclement weather in Highlands, the January 2 Town Board meeting has been re-scheduled to 7:00 p.m., January 9, in the Conference Room.

The next Regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners will be held at 7:00 p.m. on January 2, 2008, in the Conference Room of the Town Hall; the agenda is as follows:

A. Public Hearing - Zoning Amendment, ATM Kiosks.

B. Regular Board Meeting.

I. Call to order.

II. Approve agenda.

III. Approve minutes of December 5 and December 19 Regular Board meetings.

IV. Public Comment Period.

V. Reports.

1. Mayor.
2. Committees.
3. Town Attorney.
4. Engineer/Public Services Administrator.
5. Police Chief.
6. Recreation Director.
7. Planner/Zoning Administrator.
8. Treasurer.
9. Town Administrator.

VI. Old Business.

2. Valet parking for Old Edwards Inn.

VII. New Business.

1. Zoning Amendment, ATM Kiosks.
2. Receive bids on police vehicles.
3. Pole Attachment Ordinance.
4. Appoint members to ABC Board, Appearance Commission.

5. Closed Session pursuant to G.S. §143-318.11(A)(3) to consult with the Town Attorney on Riverwalk and other litigation.

6. Review of decision of Administrative Law Judge re Riverwalk LLC/Town of Highlands, and issuance of final agency decision.

VIII. Adjourn.
... VOTERS continued from pg. 1

38-34 in a December poll. Interestingly Barack Obama has earned very little support from people likely to vote in the Democratic primary in the region, always finishing well behind Clinton and Edwards among WNC voters.

For the Republicans, Fred Thompson was the top candidate for most of 2007 but his standing has fallen to third. Mike Huckabee, who recently visited western North Carolina, took a large lead over Rudy Giuliani in the most recent poll. Huckabee had 34% to 19% for Giuliani among Republicans in the mountains who responded.

Edwards and Huckabee might be the most popular candidates with each of their parties, but the candidate who would fare best in a general election is Rudy Giuliani. Public Policy Polling tested nine possible matchups for the presidency and found that he would oust Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama by large margins in the region if either of them was the Democratic nominee. Giuliani’s lead over Edwards was just 51-44, and the poll showed that the former senator from North Carolina would beat either Mike Huckabee or Mitt Romney in the mountains if either of them ended up being the choice of the Republicans.

In the Democratic race for Governor, Lieutenant Governor Bev Perdue had a big lead in the region over Treasurer Richard Moore in September but has seen the margin decline every month since to the point that Moore led Perdue 35-30 in the December poll. So far Perdue has led all of the polls on a statewide level. Neither of the candidates has shown much interest or spent much time traveling to western North Carolina so far during the campaign so the region is probably up for grabs to the candidate who works harder to court the support of mountain voters in 2008.

One candidate who has been traveling regularly to the region is senator Fred Smith, one of the Republican candidates for Governor, who has attended numerous BBQs on his behalf in small towns over the last few months. After finishing third behind opponents Bill Graham and Bob Orr in our September poll, Smith has taken the lead by increasing greater margins in our last three polls. Traveling to places like Brevard, Robinsville, and Marion has clearly helped his standing with WNC Republicans.

Several Democratic candidates from western North Carolina seeking statewide office are getting a good deal of support from voters in their neck of the woods. Buncombe County commissioner David Young, who is running for Treasurer, has been basically tied in the statewide polls with his main opponent, senator Janet Cowell from Wake County. But in the mountain region, Young has a significant lead.

Another statewide candidate from the area is Canton mayor Pat Smathers, who is seeking the office of Lieutenant Governor. He has been running a narrow second in the polls behind senator Walter Dalton of Rutherford County, but has received the greatest amount of support from his home region in most of our polls.

It’s early but it is clear that from the top of the ballot down the way western North Carolina votes could have a significant impact on who wins the statewide races next year. As a region where neither Democrats or Republicans dominate the vote, candidates in close races will need to take it seriously to come out on top.

• Tom Jensen is the Communications Director for Public Policy Polling and can be reached at tom@publicpolicypolling.com
January
Town says no antique show at Rec Park
The Highlands Playhouse will have to find another home for its antique show this year. After much discussion among members of the board and input from citizens at the board meeting, the motion to allow the Playhouse to use the Civic Center September 2007 failed 3-2.

Zoning Administrator arrested & jailed
Highlands Zoning Administrator Larry Gantenbein, 60, and his son Michael, 35, of Good Year Tire and Auto are in jail in St. Tammany Parish, LA., facing charges of possession with intent to distribute, manufacture and cultivate marijuana. On Jan. 5, at 3:53 p.m., while en route to Highlands from the west coast, the Gantenbein vehicle was pulled over for improper lane use by Louisana State Police on Interstate 12 east-bound at mile post 59 on the border of Mandeville and Covington, LA. After several continuations, the case will be heard in February.

Affordable housing plans begin
Affordable housing is one thing Highlands can't seem to offer its residents, but over the next several months, a newly appointed committee will seek ways to remedy that situation.

School board outlines facilities' needs
On Monday, Jan. 8, at a special called school board meeting, members discussed plans for improving Macon County school facilities over the next five years.

Land trusts protect 1,000 acres in area
Conservation easements on property, such as this land in Horse Cove, are an effective conservation tool that allows owners to keep ownership and own property, but to protect it from future development, and earn a federal and a North carolina tax credit. Nearly half of the 225,000 acres protected by Land Trusts in North Carolina are conservation easements. In Highlands and Cashiers, conservation easements have led to the protection of nearly 1,000 acres. See story page 10.

County wants $400,000 to upgrade landfill
The landfill on Rich Gap Road is changing to a transfer station July 2007 which means big changes for Highlands and its citizens. All regulations mandated by DNR have made the landfill operation obsolete. He said the cost of changes to continue operations as they are at Rich Gap would be astronomical. The town has decided to pay the money but asked the county to waive the tipping fees for three years.

Redefining of duties a possible at Town Hall
Suddenly, Highlands has outgrown its britches while en route to Highlands from the west coast, the Gantenbein vehicle was pulled over for improper lane use by Louisiana State Police on Interstate 12 east-bound at mile post 59 on the border of Mandeville and Covington, LA. After several continuations, the case will be heard in February.

County plans budget referendum
The county's proposed budget for 2007-2008 was official. Very soon patrons can order a martini with their meal at the Red Rib Shack, which is the first restaurant in Highlands to obtain its liquor license. According to Highlands, the business.

Landfill on Rich Gap Road is changing to a
transfer station July 2007 which means big changes for Highlands and its citizens. All regulations mandated by DNR have made the landfill operation obsolete. He said the cost of changes to continue operations as they are at Rich Gap would be astronomical. The town has decided to pay the money but asked the county to waive the tipping fees for three years.

BOE member resigns
The Macon County School Board's most recent addition — Guy Goolder — has resigned. “It is with much deliberation that I submit my resignation effective immediately. After being involved with this board and staff I have found it is not in my best interest or the interest of the child I was elected to office to further my term,” wrote Goolder in his resignation letter.

March
Gantenbeins plead not-guilty to charges
Larry Gantenbein, 60, and his son Michael, 35, were arraigned in Covington, LA., St. Tammany Parish courtroom of Judge Reggie Badeaux, Monday, Feb. 26. Both men plead not guilty to charges of possession with intent to distribute, manufacture and cultivate marijuana.

Audit shows hospital on the upswing
Despite the apparent descent of Highlands-Cashiers Hospital last year, all indicators point to a hospital slowly climbing out of its fiscal and operational hole. Though most hospitals, particularly small acute care facilities there, Friday, March 16, Developer Bill Shephard made in connection with the 2007 county facility bond issuance of amending Section 2-67 of the Highlands Code. “The only change to what has actually taken place concerns of amending Section 2-67 of the Highlands Code. “The only change to what has actually taken place concerns the fact that the board has determined it is in the best interest of the citizens to consider increasing the allocation due to the fact that the county agreed to continue to give the town $500,000 a year to help fund operational costs associated with the Rec Park. Trouble began when the Town Board asked the county to consider increasing the allocation due to a cost increase in “the operation of the parks,”

Rib Shack bar OK'd
There's been much talk about a proposed bar at The Rib Shack restaurant on Spring Street. Now it's official. Very soon patrons can order a martini with their meal at the Red Rib Shack, which is the first restaurant in Highlands to obtain its liquor license.

Smallier hi-rise planned for U.S. 64 tract
The dust has settled concerning the transaction of property on U.S. 64 east where a high-rise condominum complex was planned. Now, the buyer is ready to move forward with his plans for Highlands Villas. Though a cloud still exists on the 19-acre deed regarding the allowance of multi-story condominum structures there, Friday, March 16, Developer Bill Shephard closed on the two original tracts for a total of 21-plus acres. On Tuesday, April 3, the board without a cloud on the deed -- a four-story building housing 23, three-bedroom, 2,400-2,600 sq. ft. condominum units is planned.

April
Board approves RiverWalk changes
RiverWalk appears to be on the mend. With approved soil and erosion controls in place and working, the emotion associated with the project has dissipate.

New project planned near VZ Top
Developers for a proposed development on top of VZ Top got the go-ahead from the Town Board. Bay McPhail and Will Stolz appeared before the Planning Board twice before going to the Town Board Wednesday night for ultimate approval of their preliminary subdivision plat and for three variances. Six homes on an 11.77 acre knoll above the VZ Top condominums are planned and will be incorporated on the old Smathers estate. The six lots vary in size from 1.174 acres to 2,223 acres.

Clustering still an issue
The concept of clustering continues to elude clarification, but two other ordinances passed unanimously. At the April 4 Town Board meeting, Town Administrator Bill Coward spotlighted irregularities and ambiguous statements in the proposed ordinance and suggested it be re-worked once more before adoption.

Commissioners agree to revenue neutral budget but not the rate
Citizens wearing stickers and waving miniature signs proclaiming “MIL LIMIT 25” packed the board room, lined the walls and spilled into the hallway for the Macon County Courthouse Monday night. But the cry for a revenue neutral budget to be set at the 25 mil rate wasn't to be, at least not yet.

County's height ordinance on temporary hold
Just as county planners were crossing the finish line with the Building Height Ordinance commission put on the brakes. The problem? No distinction in the ordinance between height restrictions for commercial and multi-family projects versus single-family residences.

Easter eggs in the snow at the Rec Park
Bundled in winter outfits, families with children in tow gathered at the Rec Park on a cold April 7 morning for the annual Easter egg hunt. Despite the 27 degrees and the dusting of snow, every egg was found.

ETJ regs subject of closed session
Once back in open session, the board verified the discussion about ongoing litigation between the town and the county concerning the means of determining the number of ETJ representatives on town boards and their duties. It also discussed the legal ramifications of amending Section 2-67 of the Highlands Code. “The only change to what has actually taken place concerns the fact that the board has determined it is in the best interest of the citizens to consider increasing the allocation due to the fact that the county agreed to continue to give the town $500,000 a year to help fund operational costs associated with the Rec Park. Trouble began when the Town Board asked the county to consider increasing the allocation due to a cost increase in “the operation of the parks,”

Firm to take over pole plant audit
McGavran Engineering's proposal to perform a pole attachment and general system review of High
dand's pole plant got the green light Wednesday night with a 4 to 1 vote. At the May 2 Town Board meeting, commissioners deferred their decision on contracting with McGavran pending a reference check of the engineer.

New millage rate decreased to 24.5 cents
The concept of clustering continues to elude clarification, but two other ordinances passed unanimously. At the April 4 Town Board meeting, Town Administrator Bill Coward spotlighted irregularities and ambiguous statements in the proposed ordinance and suggested it be re-worked once more before adoption.

Recent accident raises concern about traffic
A flurry of vehicular and pedestrian traffic this past Memorial Day weekend, has brought attention to High
dand's busy Main Street. On May 26 at 2 p.m., a motorist hit a stroller being pushed by pedestrians across the Third and Main streets crosswalk. Though no one was seriously injured and the youngsters were released from Highlands-Cashiers Center. See page 12 for more photos.

Alcohol permits required of nonprofits
Just as the season is opening in Highlands, a damper of sorts has been put on the bevy of nonprofit fundraisers. A flurry of vehicular and pedestrian traffic this past Memorial Day weekend, has brought attention to High
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Highlands' 2007 Year-in-Review

2007 was another banner year for the city of Highlands. Some of the highlights:

- Affordable housing plans begin
- Affordable housing is one thing Highlands can’t seem to offer its residents, but over the next several months, a newly appointed committee will seek ways to remediate that situation.
- Land trusts protect 1,000 acres in area
- Conservation easements on property, such as this land in Horse Cove, are an effective conservation tool that allows owners to keep ownership and own property, but to protect it from future development, and earn a federal and a North Carolina tax credit. Nearly half of the 225,000 acres protected by Land Trusts in North Carolina are conservation easements. In Highlands and Cashiers, conservation easements have led to the protection of nearly 1,000 acres.
- County wants $400,000 to upgrade landfill
- The landfill on Rich Gap Road is changing to a transfer station July 2007 which means big changes for Highlands and its citizens. All regulations mandated by DNR have made the landfill operation obsolete. The town has decided to pay the money but asked the county to waive the tipping fees for three years.
- Redefining of duties a possible at Town Hall
- Suddenly, Highlands has outgrown its britches while en route to Highlands from the west coast, the Gantenbein vehicle was pulled over for improper lane use by Louisiana State Police on Interstate 12 east-bound at mile post 59 on the border of Mandeville and Covington, LA. After several continuations, the case will be heard in February.
**Highlands' 2007 Year-in-Review**

County has plans for ‘room tax’ funds

The county’s budget message, which was presented to the commission at its May meeting, lays the groundwork for many changes coming to Macon County. A change that will affect the Highlands and Franklin Chambers of Commerce is the Economic Development Commission’s (EDC) recommendation to revise the disbursement of the county’s room tax money.

Valedictorian & Salutatorian of Class of 2007 named

At the Highlands School Award Ceremony, Monday, June 4, Chase Jenkins was named Valedictorian and Lucy Herz was named Salutatorian of the senior class. Jenkins will be attending UNC-Chapel Hill and Herz will be attending Columbia University. With them is Highlands School Principal Brian Jetter.

County not releasing rec park funds

The recreation funds promised Highlands at the May Macon County Commission meeting will be held up a bit longer. At the end of last month’s meeting, the commission agreed to release the remaining $425,000 – not the $500,000 Highlands expected — with an explanation. During 2006-2007 budget year, the county allocated $100,000 for the Fire Street Park and bought property on Fire Street for $200,000, used to meet the goal for that year’s budget, and sold it for $150,000. The amount of $425,000 is what’s left of the $675,000 in recreational funds earmarked for Highlands.

Outdoor merchandise under attack

As has been the case recently, another town ordinance has surfaced to haunt it. At the June 6 Town Board meeting, Town Administrator Richard Betz told the board that numerous violations of the town’s “Outdoor Display of Merchandise” ordinance were going on at all times.

102 years and counting

Irene Picklesimer James turned 102 on June 12. At a family birthday party held at her home, she was surrounded by children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, daughters-in-law, sons-in-laws and friends. Irene is following in the footsteps of her aunt Albie McCali, of the McCali cabin fame, who lived to be 103.

Restaurant parking threatened

The June 13 Zoning Board meeting, Interim Zoning Administrator Richard Betz said the department has been investigating parking for Fressers Restaurant and Don Leon Cafe as it applies to Furniture South parking across the street.

June 27 Town Board meeting

At the special June 27 Town Board meeting, architects Mitch Sorin of Sorin Architecture and John Fisher of Fisher Architects explained their idea of a 10,000 sq. ft., two-story town government building.

Wild things living amongst us

For the second time this year, this Bobcat has come calling at the Franken residence on Rainbow Road off Clear Creek. In January, as he was getting ready to go to a basketball game, John Franken looked out his bedroom window and saw the cat amble across his yard. Then on June 14, John was standing in the yard grilling when their 14-year-old dog started growling. John turned around and about 50 feet away across the road that runs along the property was the Bobcat. This time he ran inside and grabbed a camera.

July

Home biz OK’d for R1-ETJ

At its Wednesday night meeting, the Town Board finally put to rest the issue of home-occupations in the R1-ETJ. Both the Planning Boards and the Town Board have been batting the issue around for months.

Fate of outdoor merchandise still hanging

Years ago the town drew up an ordinance prohibiting the display of outdoor merchandise. Now, with Code Enforcement Officer Josh Ward ready to enforce ordinances left unattended for years, the ambiguity of the wording has come back to haunt.

Highlands School gets Asst. Principal

An assistant principal for Highlands School has been named. At the July 23 Macon County Board meeting, the board agreed to employ, James Draheim, formerly of Gwinnett County Public Schools Shiloh Middle School, as Assistant Principal at Highlands School. He begins Aug. 1.

Bond to be set at $64 million

At two work sessions — one held Thursday night and one held Sunday afternoon and evening — Macon County Commissioners prioritized facilities requests to determine the bond referendum that will be on the ballot in November. Though a $70 million bond referendum was planned, by the time facilities requests were tallied the figure jumped to $85 million. But once commissioners prioritized needs, it fell to $64 million.

Riverwalk subdivision

Motorists traveling down U.S. 64 east have undoubtedly noticed a change at the Riverwalk subdivision. The main entrance is paved. Paving hopefully will attract new residents.

August

Officials say flood plain ordinance crucial Structural damage due to last week’s flash flooding accentuated the dangers of building and living in the flood plains of rivers and streams in Macon County.

County-run Rec Park may be

The newly formed countywide recreation commission is ready to get to work. At its first meeting Monday, July 30, the representatives from Franklin, Nantahala and Highlands met with Macon County Commission liaison Bob Simpson to appoint chairman Matt Bull, whose volunteer position is advisory. The countywide recreation program director hasn’t been hired, yet.

New school programs may keep students engaged

As students progress through the education system, the flame ignited that first day of Kindergarten risks being extinguished by the everydayness of the learning process. Bad grades, personality conflicts, problems at home, learning disabilities and other factors all eat away at a student’s ability to succeed at school.

July Rules for fire alarm and mutual aid responses change

Automatic fire alarms are becoming an increased burden on fire departments and their automatic aid departments. In 2006 the Highlands Fire & Rescue Department responded to 396 calls — 35 more than in 2005 — with the increase coming in the fire and related category which had a total of 263 calls — 55 more than last year. There were 82 fire alarms.

Board OKs restaurant parking

The parking saga concerning Fressers Eatery and Don Leon’s Café is over, at least for now. At the Aug. 8 Zoning Board meeting, members ruled in favor of reissuing both restaurants’ Special Use Permits (SUPs) and allowing the continued use of remote parking at Furniture South across N.C. 106.

Voters to decide on real estate transfer tax

Joining the five bond questions on the November 6 ballot, will be questions about levying a real estate property transfer tax. At the Aug. 13 Macon County Commission meeting, commissioners agreed to ask the voters if the county can collect up to four-tenths of a percent (.04%) from each real estate transaction.

County to build animal shelter

Finally, commissioners are ready to address the county’s long pending animal control problem. At the Aug. 23 Macon County Commission meeting, the board agreed to fund first the construction of an animal shelter for $350,000 and possibly operations from the county’s fund balance at a later date.

Town extends ABC lease

The ABC (Alcohol Beverage Control) store can keep its home on the hill between the Highlands Playhouse and Town Hall for another three years. At the Aug. 15 Town Board meeting, commissioners agreed to extend the lease with the store at $1 a year with the understanding that in three years some change may take place.

Fine Art Center to break ground

On Tuesday, Aug. 14, members of the Fine Art Center team — Bob Fisher, Pat Taylor, Tom Clark and Hank Ross — and the town’s Josh Ward, met with Tim Murphy, project manager and Max Couch, construction supervisor of Trehel Corporation of Clemson, S.C., who will be building the art center.

Macon County in ‘green’ drought

The Division of Forest Resources has initiated a statewide ban on all open burning and canceled all burning permits effective Aug. 21, 2007. The ban on open burning will be in effect until further notice.

New diplomas to address graduation & drop-out rates

With a single unanimous motion, Macon County School Board may have figured out a way to increase its cohort graduation rate and decrease, if not eliminate, its drop-out rate. At the Aug. 27 school board meeting, board members approved two new diploma programs at Franklin High School — one for students at risk of dropping or not graduating due to a lack of credits and one for students who are bored with the traditional high school course offerings and are ready for more.

School system stands poised for future

Most of Macon County Schools hit targets set by the state concerning Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) for the 2006-2007 school year. The ABCs of Public Education began in the 1996-1997 school year as part of North Carolina’s school improvement program.

Child’s play in local garden

Seth Inglish on Whiteside Road was wondering why the daisies she planted around her waterfall and pond were showing signs of wear. Now she knows! The area has become a playground for a mama bear and her three cubs.

September

Highlands and Franklin tie

Highlander Greg Porter races Franklin opponent at Franklin. The teams tied, 2-2. Highlands plays Franklin at home tonight, Thursday, Aug. 29 at 5 p.m.

Clerks to vote on ‘liquor by the drink’

Come November the citizens of Highlands will decide whether liquor by the drink can be sold at restaurants in town.

Judge rules in Riverwalk’s favor

On Thursday, Sept. 13, Administrative Law Judge Beecher Gray granted Riverwalk’s Motion for Summary Judgment dismissing the Town’s $200,000 lawsuit levied by the Town of Highlands in December of 2006. “In making his ruling, Judge Gray indicated the town failed to follow proper procedure in assessing the fines and that the fines were not supported by evidence the Town Board had before it at the Dec. 6, 2006 meeting,” said Riverwalk Attorney Billy Clarke with Robert & Stevens law firm in Asheville.

Flood plain ordinance coming to Highlands

The state has finally released the county’s long-awaited flood plain map which was revised due to the devastation caused by Hurricane Ivan. On Sept. 19, the Macon County Watershed Council met to finalize the Flood Damage Control Ordinance and that night, the Board learned it needed to adopt a similar ordinance.

PB says ‘yes’ to outdoor displays

Finally, after a succession of Town Board and Planning Board meetings, a decision was made concerning the display of outdoor merchandise. It’s allowed. At the Sept. 24 Planning Board meeting, members agreed upon verbiage allowing outdoor merchandise displays similar to the one in Vail, CO.

The race is on for three Town Board seats

Six candidates have lined up for three seats on the Highlands Town Board. Two seats are now occupied by Commissioners Dennis DeWolff and Alan Marsh who are both running for their second term, the other will be vacated by Commissioner Herb James who leaves the post after four terms.

October

Hospital gets new general surgeon

General surgery will soon be available again at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. The hospital announced this week that a board-certified Atlanta surgeon will open a practice here Nov. 5 in association with the hospital. F. Augustus “Gus” Dozier, MD, FACS, who already has a North Carolina medical license, was certified in his specialty by the hospital’s medical staff last week. Hospital board members gave their final stamp of approval to the deal at their regular meeting on Thursday.

Meadows Mountain Realty sets new record

The Rainwater Estate, at the top of Highlands County Club, has sold for a record $6.3 million, the highest price ever paid for a single-family home as reported in the Highlands-Cashiers Multiple Listing Service.

Restaurant parking plagues ZB

The restaurant parking issue just won’t die. At the Oct. 10 Zoning Board meeting, Carter Bruns, owner of Wild Thyme Gourmet on Carolina Way, requested a Special Use Permit (SUP) to legalize his seat-to-seat parking ratio in the restaurant.

Gorge Road tractor-trailer near misses continue

Tractor-trailer trucks aren’t allowed on the Gorge Road unless they are making a delivery in Highlands. Yet, accidents and near misses continue.

Boards to try talking things out

Experiencing a meeting of the Macon County Commission and the Town Board of Highlands is like witnessing a dysfunctional family try to communicate. At a dinner meeting between the two boards held at...
... TOBACCO continued from page 1

The 6th graders at MMS were not able to attend the presentation due to limited space in the MMS gymnasium. However, one of the presentations was recorded for future educational use in the schools. The recording will be made available to students at Nantahala and Highlands schools, as well as the 6th graders at MMS and any 5th graders whose principals want them to view the video.

Von Behrens discussed his use of tobacco and the consequences it brought him, as well as several life lessons for the students. He emphasized that “you can’t judge a book by its cover,” and he also talked about loving and respecting your parents. Von Behrens mentioned that when he was in and out of hospitals, it was his mother and not his friends who was always by his side.

Jennifer Hollifield, with the Macon County Health Department, said after Von Behrens’ presentation there were many cans of spit tobacco found in the trash at FHS. “We all feel that if one student stops using tobacco due to these presentations then it was worth every thing to get Gruen to Macon County,” she said.

On the Friday following Von Behrens’ visit, public health dentists Dr. David Oliver and Dr. Camelia Chang provided oral cancer screenings at FHS and MMS to students who had parental permission. Six students were seen at MMS and no problems were identified, while 17 FHS students were evaluated, and 7 of these were referred to their own dentists about potential problems.

Von Behrens’ presentation was organized by Jennifer Hollifield and Diane Alexander at the Macon County Department of Public Health. They wanted to recognize Dr. David Oliver, Dr. Camelia Chang, Lead School Nurse Jennifer Garrett, School Nurse Debbie Hamilton, School Nurse Rita Etherwood, and FHS principal Gary Shields and MMS principal Todd Gibbs.

For more information about the North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund’s tobacco cessation efforts, visit www.healthwellnc.org.

... ETJ continued from page 1

there is no genuine issue of material fact,” wrote Judge Elmore in is brief.

“The statute in question, states that a city shall provide a means of proportional representation based on population for residents of the extraterritorial area to be regulated. The statute doesn’t define what means should be used. However, our Supreme Court has stated, ‘It is often said that matters of local concern are and should be left largely to the judgment and discretion of a town government and that the courts will not interfere with their acts unless they are manifestly unreasonable and oppressive’.”

Judge Elmore said the county didn’t demonstrate that the town’s method was unreasonable, nor has it demonstrated that a city cannot provide its own means of proportional representation.

“The statute plainly states that a city shall provide its own means of proportional representation and we, like the trial court decline to read the statute otherwise. Accordingly, we affirm the order and the judgment of the trial court,” he wrote.

“We felt quite confident in the fair way the exact method of determining proportional representation is spelled out in detail in our code, now — same as in the brief the Town filed,” said Town Administrator Richard Betz. “And it clearly says ETJ members can participate in all Planning Board and Zoning Board matters — which they have been doing anyway.”

The county had hoped to put more ETJ representatives on at least the Planning Board and possibly the Zoning board. Currently there are seven members on the Planning Board — two of which are from the ETJ. There are five members on the Zoning Board — one of which is from the ETJ.

Town Attorney Bill Coward said the county has a limited right to appeal to the Superior Court of Macon County — to petition the court to review the latest ruling. “There is no guarantee the Superior Court will hear the case,” hesaid. “It’s probably a waste of time and money to pursue it at this point.”

County representatives have not said if they will pursue the case any further.
Town asks county for help

Though the Town Board thinks it’s likely High-
lands will pay to build a transfer station at the land-
fills, they’re not beyond asking for financial help from the
county. At the Oct. 17 Town Board meeting, commis-
sioners voted 4 to 1 to ask the county to forego tipping fees for about four years to help offset the cost of build-
ing a municipal solid waste (MSW) transfer station. Town Administrator Richard Betz sent the county the
letter shortly thereafter.

November

Senator Snow requests funds for town

At a special Town Board meeting, Monday, Oct.
29, the Town Administrator Richard Betz distributed
copies of a resolution drafted by Senator John Snow
requesting the release of discretionary funds for the
paving of Hickory Hill Road, Chownan Drive, and Culla-
saja Drive.

Hunrevy and Ruby are newest additions to police dept.

Slowly, the Highlands Police Department is ac-
quiring tools common place in big-city police depart-
ments — an all-terrain vehicle and a drug dog.

Election results mean big changes

Only 29% of Macon County’s 23,980 voters cast
their ballots Tuesday but that was enough to stop the
county’s bond issuance in its tracks, change the fate of
the Highlands Town Board and make the sale of
mixed drinks and malt beverages allowable in High-
lands. At the December Town Board meeting, incum-
bent Dennis DeWolf and new commissioners John
Burton Dotson and Larry Rogers will be sworn in of-
cce.

Wheeler house burns in Saturday fire

About 4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 10, life changed for
Dr. Fats Wheeler and her family but thanks to the com-
unity that is Highlands, change won’t be as bad as it
could be. A couple of neighbors in the vicinity of Sat-
lah Ridge Road had just returned home from a hike up
Whiteside Mountain when they saw smoke billowing
out of the eves of the Wheeler house.

Highlands receives top Traffic Safety Honor

AAA Carolinas’ Foundation for Traffic Safety awarded Highlands the top honor as North Carolina’s
most Outstanding Traffic Safety Community. The Foun-
dation has given this award in the past four years in
an endeavor to recognize cities that make a strong effort
to make their state’s highways safer.

Horton new county manager

It only took three months for the county to find its
next county manager and as it turns out, he’s been
here before. Commissioners found what they believe the
county needs in C. Jack Horton, 57, current county
manager of Caldwell County in Lenoir, N.C.; popula-
tion 78,000. He begins January, 7, 2008 at a salary of
$125,000.

Cooley new town planner

After almost a year, Highlands now has a Plan-
ning and Development Director. The job title has
changed, but for the most part the duties of Joseph
Cooley will mimic those of the previous Zoning Admin-
istrator/Planning Director. Cooley is currently a lawyer
with the Smith, Gambrell & Russell Land Use Group
in Atlanta, GA.

Cyprus now offers mixed drinks & beer

Another restaurant has joined the ranks of Pere-
grini’s, Madison Restaurant and the Rib Shack. Come
this weekend alcoholic beverages and beer will be avail-
able at Cyprus International Restaurant, too.

‘Sex-ed’ class starting Spring ’08

Teen pregnancies continue to be a problem in Macon
County so school administrators are ready to try a pro-active approach to the subject of sex educa-
tion. At the Nov. 19 Macon County School Board meet-
ning held in Nantahala, the board voted to recruit a
Healthy Living teacher to begin January 2008.

December

Hospital hires 2nd surgeon

Dr. Billy Noell joins the staff.

Room tax committee begins groundwork

An organizational meeting of the newly formed
Occupancy Tax Study Committee met Wednesday to
discuss possible changes in the way occupancy tax
money is distributed in the county. Macon County Com-
missioners Bob Simpson and Brian McClellan co-
chairred the committee. Also present were Bob Kiely-
ka, of Highlands Chamber of Commerce; Linda Har-
buck, of Franklin Chamber of Commerce; Ron Baker,
Nantahala lodging representative; Josh Drake, Frank-
lin lodging representative; Hank Ross, Town of High-
lands commissioner, and Mike Grubermann, Town of
Franklin commissioner. Rick Segel, the Highlands lodg-
ing representative was absent.

King and queen for the night!

Highlands School seniors Baily Buck and Josh
Hendricks were named Homecoming Queen and King
at the dance Saturday night at the Performing Arts Cen-
ter. See more photos on page 20.

Restaurant parking solution offered

The Town Board may be nearing a solution to
the restaurant parking problem the town has been
plagued with lately. At Wednesday’s Town Board meet-
ing, owner of Wild Thyme Gourmet, Nancy Brun sug-
gested the town consider allowing dual-use parking to
satisfy the town’s seat versus parking space require-
ment for restaurants outside the B1 zone district.

Zachary Park continues to grow

At Monday night’s Macon County Commission
meeting, the board firmly agreed to purchase about two acres next to Zachary Park. A 1,986-acre
parcel owned by Lucille Zachary Potts, which is next
to the 1.761-acre parcel for which the county paid
$50,000 in earnest money in October, abuts Zachary
Park property.

Stay problem soon finalized

Pending an ordinance, the county is ready to form
an Animal Care and Control Unit. At the Dec. 10 Ma-
con County Commission meeting, the board heard from
Sheriff Robbie Holland who sits on the county’s Ani-
mal Control Study Committee chaired by Dr. Amy
Patterson.

Case of missing Rec Park money closed

Almost a year later, District Attorney Michael Bon-
foey issued a statement concerning the N.C. State Bu-
deo of Investigation (SBI) findings in the matter. In
a letter to Mayor Mullen dated June 6, 2007, Bonfoey
described the SBI findings: “After a four-month investiga-
tion of the Highlands Recreation Department which was requested by High-
lands Police Chief Bill Harrell on August 17, 2006, the
SBI interviewed more than 24 people concerning “lost
money” at the recreation department and requested
an audit from the town.

Soccer field proposed at Highlands School

Members of the county recreation soccer league have
designed a way to construct an extra soccer field in Highlands.
On-going
• Yoga at the Rec Park, 7:30 a.m. Monday and Wednesday. Call 526-4340 for information.
• Live music at Fressers in Helen’s Barn with Cy Timmons Wed-Sat 6 p.m. until.
• NA open meeting every Saturday at 7:30 p.m. of the ACC Satellite Group at the Highlands Community Church, 242 Hwy 107 N. in Cashiers. Call 888-764-0365 or go to the website: www.ncmana.org.
• Step Aerobics at the Rec Park, 4-5 p.m., Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays. $5 per class.
• At Health Tracks at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, various exercise classes. Call Jeanette Fisher at 828-526-1F1T.

“Circle of Life” support group continues at the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital at the Jane Woodward room 201, 10 a.m. until noon. Call Barbara Buchanan at 526-1402 or Florence Flanagan at 743-2567.

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.
• Every Monday
  • Recreational Bridge 1 p.m. at the Rec Park. $3 per person.
• Every Tuesday
  • Highlands Rotary Club meets at noon at the Highlands Conference Center.
  • Weight Watchers meets at the Highlands Civic Center. Weigh-in is at 5:30. The meeting starts at 6 p.m.
  • Open Studio Night Figure Drawing: Informal instruction available for beginners. Bring your sketch pad or paint box for a leisurely session of figure drawing/painting. Cost is $12, $10 for “Friends” of the Gallery.
• Every Wednesday
  • “The Bible Tells Me So” at 6:15 p.m. at the Highlands United Methodist Church. The study will meet in the Fellowship Hall at 6:15.
  • Highlands MountainTop Rotary Club meets at the Highlands Conference Center at 7:30 a.m.
  • Men’s interdenominational Bible Study at 8:30 a.m. at First Baptist Church.
• CBC will offer the AWANA program for kids — K-5th grade non-denominational Bible-based program for kids — from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

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. Study sessions will begin at 6:30 p.m. For more information call 828-524-6777 or 706-746-9964.

Every Thursday
• Al-Anon Meetings, noon in the First Presbyterian Church basement at Fifth & Main Street.
• Every Friday
  • The Girls’ Clubhouse meets in the school cafeteria 3-4 p.m. All 6-8 grade girls are welcome. Come have fun while serving others. For more information, call Kim Lewicki 526-0782.

Every Saturday
• Live music at Cyprus Restaurant in the Dillard Village Shopping Center at 9:30 p.m. $10 cover.
• Children’s classes ongoing at Bascom-Louise Gallery — cost is $5 per student.

Saturday, Jan. 5
• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a 2.5 mile easy-to-moderate hike along a creek in Blue Valley to see three types of mines that formerly yielded amethysts and other semi-precious gem stones. Elevation change is 150 feet; there is one small creek crossing. Meet at the Highlands Bank of America at 9:30 a.m. Drive 20 miles round trip with water, lunch, and wear sturdy, comfortable shoes. Hikes are limited to 20 people. Call leader Jim Whitehurst, 526-8134, for reservations or more information.

Saturday, Jan. 6
• Auditions for the Highlands Community Players production, The Last Night of Ballyhoo by Alfred Uhry. Winner of the 1997 Tony Award for Best Play. 3-5 p.m. at PAC on Chestnut Street. Performing Arts Center, Chestnut Street, Highlands. Performance dates are May 8-11 and May 15-18. Rehearsals will begin mid March, 2008.
• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy-to-moderate 2-mile hike on the Green Cove trails at Outward Bound Camp. Meet at the Smoky Mountain Visitor Center on US 441 at 2 p.m. Drive 8 miles round trip. Bring a drink, a snack if you wish, and wear sturdy comfortable shoes. Hikes are limited to 20 people. Call leader Kay Coriell, 369-6820, for reservations or more information. Visitors are welcome, but no pets please.
• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a 10-mile strenuous hike, with several ups and downs, on the Georgia Bartram Trail, partly along the Chattooga River. Meet at the Highlands Bank of America at 8 a.m. Drive 30 miles round trip with car shuttle. If coming from Franklin, call leader for alternate meeting place. Bring water, a lunch, and wear sturdy, comfortable shoes. Hikes are limited to 20 people. Call leader Doug Deane, 864-718-9265, for reservations or more information. Visitors are welcome, but no pets please.

Sunday, Jan. 7

Sunday, Jan. 20
• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy-to-moderate 3-mile hike on the Bartram Trail from Wallace Branch, including a couple of side trails, with an elevation change of 300 feet. Drive 6 miles round trip. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin (opposite Burger King) at 2 p.m. Bring a drink, a snack if you wish, and wear sturdy comfortable shoes. Hikes are limited to 20 people. Call leader Kay Coriell, 369-6820, for reservations or more information. Visitors are welcome, but no pets please.

Tuesday, Jan. 22
• HIARP'T morning discussions are 10-11:30 a.m. at the Civic Center with lunch to follow for those interested. All are welcome to attend, although we do ask that the material to be discussed be read prior to the discussions. For more information, please contact Creighton Peden (cphi2@verizon.net) 526-4038. “Once a Soldier” by David Craig. Magazine of Columbia University, Fall 2007, pp. 25-29. Will be circulated at previous meetings. Coordinator: Carole Light.

Saturday, Jan. 26
• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a 4.6 mile moderate hike on the Appalachian Trail in the Standing Indian area from Long Branch to...
Glassmine Gap, with an elevation change of 1000 feet. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin (opposite Burger King) at 10 a.m. Drive 25 miles round trip. Bring a drink, lunch, and wear sturdy comfortable shoes. Hikes are limited to 20. Call leader Bill Van Horn, 369-1983, for reservations or more information. Visitors are welcome but no pets please.

Tuesday, Jan. 29
• HIARPT morning discussions are 10-11:30 a.m. at the Civic Center with lunch to follow for those interested. All are welcome to attend. For more information, please contact Creighton Peden (cphi2@verizon.net) 526-4038. Coordinator: Martha Porter. "My plan is to give some sort of summary or overview of the talks by Barbara Brown Taylor and Walter Brueggeman at the conference in St. Simon the preceding week. It is described as a 'January Adventure in Emerging Christianity.'

Tuesday, Feb. 5
• HIARPT morning discussions are 10-11:30 a.m. at the Civic Center with lunch to follow for those interested. All are welcome to attend, although we do ask that the material to be discussed be read prior to the discussions. For more information, please contact Creighton Peden (cphi2@verizon.net) 526-4038. The Assault on Reason by Gore. Coordinator: John Gaston

Tuesday, Feb. 12
• HIARPT morning discussions are 10-11:30 a.m. at the Civic Center with lunch to follow for those interested. All are welcome to attend, although we do ask that the material to be discussed be read prior to the discussions. For more information, please contact Creighton Peden (cphi2@verizon.net) 526-4038. The Assault on Reason by Gore. Coordinator: John Gaston

Tuesday, Feb. 19
• HIARPT morning discussions are 10-11:30 a.m. at the Civic Center with lunch to follow for those interested. All are welcome to attend, although we do ask that the material to be discussed be read prior to the discussions. For more information, please contact Creighton Peden (cphi2@verizon.net) 526-4038. The Assault on Reason by Gore. Coordinator: John Gaston

Tuesday, Feb. 26
• HIARPT morning discussions are 10-11:30 a.m. at the Civic Center with lunch to follow for those interested. All are welcome to attend, although we do ask that the material to be discussed be read prior to the discussions. For more information, please contact Creighton Peden 526-4038. "Our Bio-Tech Future," by Freeman Dawson. The New York Review of Books, Vol. 54, No. 12, July 19, 2007. Coordinator: Creighton Peden

On the question of meaning, the authors and I agree on the belief that purpose is intrinsic to meaning. In other words, there has to be a purpose behind the universe for life to have meaning. That is where our similarities end. In this theoretical model we are told that our experiences are leading to god’s reawakening. However, if having knowledge presupposes experience, and this deity must have all knowledge, then are we not trapped in a learning exercise without end?

When it comes to morality, Ms. Brugger tells us that good and bad are just parts of god. Therefore good and evil are equally valid. According to this theory, one has no basis to condemn Hitler or Stalin because they were just “playing their parts.” In a recent article Ms. Brugger used the example of the sequels of Texas Chainsaw Massacre as evidence that god wanted to experience being a serial killer. By that logic god also yearns to be a pedophile due to the plight of child pornography. While Ms. Brugger wrote in the same article that she didn’t support such behavior, genuine condemnation is not a possibility in her worldview. She ended that article by assuring us that there was no need to worry because, “everything was “perfect exactly the way it is.” Somehow I don’t think that would bring much comfort to the woman that has been brutally raped or the oppressed people in Darfur.

Finally, when it comes to the question of destiny, we are told that their worldview doesn’t offer any definitive answer. While I commend their honesty in this admission of shortcoming, questions must still be asked. If there is no ultimate judgment, which the authors reject, what of justice not carried out in this lifetime? If there is no system of deterrence, such as retributive reclamation or purgatory, why choose a life of self-sacrifice over a life of debauchery or hedonism? There can be no distinction between the philanderer and the philanthropist.

In closing, I would like to make it clear that I am not picking on Mr. Hancock and Ms. Brugger and mean no disrespect. I just felt it was worth mentioning that monumental issues such as those mentioned above are no laughing matter and certainly no game.

Waylon Chastain
Highlands
Free Classified Ads for items FOR SALE less than $1,000.
All other terms: 20 words for $5; 2 for each 10-word increment.
Email copy to: highlandseditor@aol.com or FAX to 1-866-212-8913
Send check to: Highlands’ Newspaper P.O. Box 2703 Highlands, NC 28741 828-526-0782

HELP WANTED
The Literacy Council of Highlands is seeking an Assistant Director to help with all Council activities including program direction, office management and grant writing. Applicant must have a written and oral Spanish knowledge and be available Monday-Thursday from 11 a.m. until 7 p.m. Please call Breta at 526-9938, ext 240, for more information. Job begins in January.

Computer Volunteer Needed at Art Center — Calling all techies: The Bascom-Louise Gallery is in need of a volunteer to help the nonprofit art center with its computers. From networking to printer issues to backing up their computers, the art center could use an extra person to volunteer his or her time to help. The art center also needs a wide range of other volunteers to help with several different areas: gallery docents, hospitality workers, gallery shop workers, clerical assistants, visitor services, library assistants, teaching assistants and Movers and Shakers (those who help with prop building, landscaping and other indoor and outdoor physical activities). For more information on volunteer opportunities, call (828) 526-0207.

RN or LPN Needed at a Physicians’ Office with Highlands-Cashiers Hospital — Full-time, Monday-Friday position. Requires experience working in a clinic or physicians’ office. Cardiology background preferred. Good communication, organizational, and computer skills a must. Full benefits, or the option to opt out of benefits for an increase in pay. Available after 30 days of employment. Pre-employment screening required. Call Randy at 828-526-1301 or apply online at www.hchospitals.org.

RNs at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital and Fidelia Eckerd Living Center — Full-time, Part-time, and PRN positions available for 12 hour day and night shifts. Excellent wage scale, with shift and weekend differentials. Full benefits, or the option to opt out of benefits for an increase in pay, available after 30 days of full-time employment. We are now offering part-time employees, working at least 24 hours a week, medical insurance. Pre-employment screening required. Call Mandy at 828-526-1301 or apply online at www.hchospitals.org.

Real Estate for Sale
Lot for sale, 90 acre, drive graded, 2 bed septic approved, Shared well, off Turtle Pond and Dendy Orchard Road, 4 miles from center of town $39,000. Call Ty at 828-577-9257.

Scaly Mountain Building lots, views, creeks, wooded. 2.5 acres, start at $150,000 by owner, owner financing available. (404) 831-0222 or gonzo628atan.com.

Lots for Sale in Shelby Place — $110,000 each. Call 828-526-2874.


Upper Creek Road at Cornet LANE, 1.20+ acres less than 4 miles to Main Street. Paved Access. Some winter views 3 sided corner lot has old logging road as your driveway. $62,500 Call 526-8201 or 787-2307.

Buck Creek — 1600 sq. ft finished basement, creek front. Handicapped accessible w/elevator; 3 BR 2 large BA, $329,000. 828-526-8038.

Welcome Home to Mountain Grove & Franklin, NC — Unprecedented opportunity to own 100 acres in picturesque and historic Mountain Grove, (1A5) Macon County, NC! Combine the pleasures and opportunities of a secluded high mountain valley (elevations from 3100 to 3400 feet) with unusually easy to access land. Live on your own farm with 30 acres of pastures, two barns, a remodeled main house, and a new log cabin for guests. Streaks, creeks and hiking trails throughout. Perfect for a family and equestrian retreat. Tremendous investment/development potential! All within 20 minutes (via a soon to be paved State Road) of the historic downtowns of Sylva and Franklin. No like it in the whole region! Contact Tom Ryan at (828) 349-4465 or ryan@santuarync.com for more information or visit our website at www.santuarync.com/farm_forsale6.html.

FREE .07 UMMER 3 WITH PURCHASE OR RENT THIS NEWLY REMODELED HOME — 4 BEDROOMS, 2.5 BATH HOME WITH BEAUTIFUL LONG RANGE VIEWS, LIVINGROOMS, RECREATION ROOM, GRANITE KITCHEN, FIREPLACE, GREAT INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY, CAN BE LEASED OR PURCHASED. $69,000. Call 305 458-0033.

Beautiful RV/Park Model Lot — Falls View Resort. Dillard, GA. $720,000 706-746-0002.

Lot in Cowee Ridge Highlands — (off Hwy. 64), 4.500 ft. elevation. Great views. Two acres. Southern exposure. 4 bedroom septic installed, community water, paved road, gated community. $300,000 Firm. Call 478-741-8818, FSBO.

RV Lot — North Carolina Mountains: At Lake Toxaway Lot and 1/2 Beautifully landscaped with Stone Work and Plantings Yearly Fees $350, $120,000. 863-651-1411.


Creek is Free! — With the purchase of one or both of these wooded parcels, just off Highway 28 in the NE Georgia mountains within 15 minutes of Highlands. 1.09 acres and/or 1.10 acres on a county-maintained road. Serious inquiries only. Please call 864-710-4577 for information.

In Town — 3 bedroom, 2 bath, stream, large level yard. Easy walk to Main Street. $450,000, by owner. Call 828-226-6123, 12/21.

House for Sale (Islamorada, Florida) — Two bedroom, one 1/2 bath conch house for sale on Mile Marker 86, near Founders Park on Oceanside. House sits on a 8.520 square foot lot in a great subdivision with a public boat ramp on the next street over. Founders Park, which is across the street, has a park with a boat ramp, marina, pool, beach, tennis courts, etc. Great deal — owner moving out of state. $475,000. Call 305-852-4369 for more info.


Lakefront Acre in Scaly — $25,000 OBO. Details. P.O. Box 260789, Pembroke Pines, FL, 33026.

Commercial for Sale — Log cabin at crossings in Cashiers for sale or lease. Call 526-4154.

Commercial for Sale — 3 acres. U.S. 64 frontage, cashiers Road. 2 acres, 3 warehouses, good income. Call 526-4145.

House for Sale — HFCC 2 story split, 3/2, large lot, lake, golf course, mountain views, membership available but optional. $795,000. Call 526-4145.


Oceanfront Lot Key Largo, Florida — Cleared, buildable with all services, 250 feet of waterfront. Located in the NE George subdivision. $599,900. For information and photos call Frank (954) 964-7649 or email...
**Classifieds**

- **NC, OTTO, 38 ACRES** 10 miles from Georgia State line, high elevation, big views, driveway and homesite cleared call owner. 770-952-9100.

- **IN TOWN** – 3/2.5 log home. The cottage lakeside at Harris Lake. Less than 2 years old. $319,000. Call Ty at 828-577-9261.


- **LOTS** – Exclusive RiverRock, Tuckasegee Village: 2.1 acre Lot 48, great building site, adjoins horse farm, $364,900 and THE premier view Lot 34, best view lot development. $799,000 Call HUTCH (706) 831-0992 owner Agent.


- **BY BUILDER** – 4/3, new construction. Executive home. 1.5 acres, bordered by 2 creeks and a pond in a new upscale subdivision less than 5 minutes from downtown Franklin. $485K. Call 371-3669.

- **ITEMS FOR SALE**

  **Antique furniture for sale. Double size spool bed $300. Queen Anne sofa, 2 side chairs and rocking chair $1,000.** Will sell separately. Call Bob at Sweeetreats 828 526-9822 or 828 369-6263.

  **22x37 Garden Arbor with brass finials; 1 water closet - all almond color. Excellent condition. $300. Call 526-3999.**


  **KING-SIZE HEADBOARD $40; new glass fireplace screen, (still in box) polished brass finish, fits fireplace opening $24 ½ $29 ¾. Width 30" to 37 ⅓". $125. Call 827-3799.**

  **LATE KENMORE FLOOR MODEL VACUUM 5.0 power with 2-motor systems. $149. Call 526-4077.**

  **MEDICAL LIFT CHAIR** – Used one week. Paid $500, asking $250. 526-5588.

  **ANTIQUE CHERRY DINING TABLE** from Estate Sale. Double drop-leaf. Rope carved legs. Seats 4-10 people Extends to 4 to 10 ft $1,500 obo 828-787-1515.

  **BIRDHOUSE 2 – 1/2 feet high by 1 foot 3 inches wide by 1 foot 2 inches deep. With feeders. $25. Call 526-9245.**

  **DOM KENNEL 10′ x 10′ x 6′, heavy gauge chainlink. Like New. $175. Call 828-342-6789 or home at 828-526-2700.**

  **J&J LAWN AND LANDSCAPING SERVICES** – complete lawn and landscaping service, spring cleanup, gutter cleaning, under-brushing, tree removal, lot clearing, storm cleanup, rockwork, retaining walls, flowerbeds, firewood. 828-526-2251.

  **SHIPPING SERVICES** – stork’s wrap, pack & ship ups Ground & Next Day Air services and large furniture shipping available. Packing services and/or supplies. Gift wrapping and fax services. 323 Hwy 107 N., Cashiers, NC (1/2 mile from crossroads) (828) 743-3222.

  **HIGHLANDS SHUTTLE SERVICE** – Atlanta Airport Shuttle. Drive - Away Auto Delivery. All Out-Of-Town Trips Driving Services. Call 526-9076.

- **MARK’S SEDAN DRIVING SERVICE** – All airports – Atlanta, Asheville, scenic tours, parks, special occasions, restaurant trips, auto delivery. Town Car. Call 828-524-0424 or cell (239)-292-3623. 10/25

- **FREIGHT SERVICES** – view clearing to the most complicated tree removal, under brushing, stump removal/grinding/brush chippping/hauling and storm cleanup. For good quality, dependable services, fully insured, give us a call at 828-526-2251.

- **Hemmlock Woolley Adelgida Treatment** – By J&J Lawn and Landscaping services, NC Licensed Applicator, complete lawn and landscaping service. Call 828-526-2251.


- **SOLID DARK OAK DINETTE CABINET** – 19"x64"x84". 3 glass windows on top. 3 drawers on bottom. 2 doors bottoms with keys. Imported from Belgium. Excellent condition. $1,500. Call 369-3250.

- **Vehicles for Sale**


  **MITSUBISHI 2006 RAIDER PICK-UP TRUCK** – 4WD. Tool Box, 10,500 miles. $18,000. Call 526-0539.


  **2006 SUZUKI DR 200SE MOTORCYCLE** – 29 miles, only, perfect condition, 1-cylinder, 4-stoke, 199cc. $3,000. Call 828-342-6789 or at home at 828-526-5507.

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Linda Wright David joins board of Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust

Linda Wright David was recently elected to the Board of Directors of the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust. David is a 6th generation Highlander and is a great niece of Henry Wright for whom the Wright Preserve is named. Donated to the Nature Conservancy, this last remaining stand of old growth forest was turned over to the Highlands Land Trust in the late 1990s. David spent her childhood hiking through the woods, riding horses, square dancing and enjoying herself at her Aunt Helen’s barn, which was the site of many enjoyable hours for residents of Highlands. She states that she feels very privileged and 

See DAVID page 21

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Memories Yet to Come

Gerard believes in the art of true Expressionism. In the past he has explored other styles, including representational, figurative and portraiture, but his abstract work has held true over time. In all his exhibitions whether in Chicago, Atlanta, D.C. or Miami, one can feel the strength these paintings evoke.

Bringing to life the tradition of abstract expressionism, Jonas Gerard emerged fifty years ago into the art scene with work which has currently evolved into a mesmerizing explosion of color, contrast and movement. And like the great contemporary Masters, such as Willem DeKooning, Jackson Pollock, Hans Hoffman and Franz Kline, Gerard has found his very own style of abstraction which is continuously growing and developing.

Gerard comments, “As an artist, it’s important for me to give the viewer the opportunity to become one with sensitivity. This art will reveal a truth that conveys an existence that is unique within our very soul. In my painting and mixed media techniques I open the door to time and space, allowing me to abstract from the primitive and contemporary states, as well as from moments of my personal life. I believe that through abstract art we can channel ourselves consciously and subconsciously to experience the sustaining power of the universe.”

“Each of my compositions is an expression of an inner journey where I aim to step out of my own way and balance within themoment, all the intuitive inspirations coming at me. There is a constant and ongoing evolution in my relationship with the canvas. The absolute joy of self discovery and self expression is an integral part of who I am as an artist. This process demands a kind of fearless honesty. The resulting painting is loaded like a charged battery that never fails, continuously holding the viewer’s attention for a lifetime.”

If you watch him paint, you can actually see the trusting in his intuition. While mesmerizing music plays in the background, he becomes completely absorbed in expressing what is in his heart with a gestural painting style that appears almost as a spontaneously choreographed dance. The strong rhythms and sounds of his music are, for him, instrumental in creating the daring space to transcend limitations and fears that may come up. To the viewer, it may seem that the painting is done by the music itself while the artist is simply holding the brush.

“As an artist, it’s important for me to give the viewer the opportunity to come in contact with the essence of what these paintings are about,” says Gerard.

More than 50 years of passion and dedication to his work has brought him to the level he has achieved. His work has been exhibited and collected all over the United States and abroad, in private as well as in public collections. “We the People,” a bicentennial portrait of the United States, presented to President Ford in the White House in 1975, is in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

The 20/20 feature is scheduled to be aired on Friday, January 11, 2008. Check the local listings for the time. Jonas Gerard’s work may be seen at Summit One Gallery. Located in “The Galleries” on South Second Street, Highlands NC. 828.526.2673. summiteonegallery@verison.net www.summiteonegallery.com

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Between 70 and 80 family members joined residents and other guests at the annual Christmas party at Eckerd Living Center Thursday evening. Santa and a half dozen “elves for the evening” passed out presents and spread large helpings of holiday cheer. Each year hospital employees, volunteers and others adopt an Eckerd Center resident and buy gifts (selecting names from the ornaments that hang on a large Christmas tree put up each year in the hospital’s cafeteria). Extended nursing patients in the hospital were also included in the celebration. The hospital’s nutrition services department provided plenty of hors d’oeuvres and sweet treats for the residents, guests, and staff. In all, some 200 people celebrated the holiday together.

... OBITUARIES from page 3

Grace Louise Keener

Grace Louise Keener, age 97, of Three Forks Trail, Clayton, GA, died Tuesday, December 25, 2007 in a local nursing home. She was a native of Macon County, the daughter of the late Henry and Lillie Picklesimer Talley. She was married to the late Robert Keener, who died in 1978. She was a homemaker, a farmer and an avid gardener. She was a member of Macedonia Baptist Church.

She is survived by two daughters, Ruby Watts of Clayton, GA and Eleanor Blankenship of Sylva, N.C.; one son, James Keener of Highlands, N.C.; one sister, Ellie Jenkins of Franklin, N.C.; 10 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren and five great-great-grandchildren also survive. She was preceded in death by a brother, Ed Talley.

Funeral services were held Friday, December 28th at 2 p.m. at Macedonia Baptist Church with Rev. Everett Wilson officiating. Burial was in Macedonia Baptist Church Cemetery. Robert Crowe, Ronnie Crowe, Kenneth Crowe, Brian Crowe, Steve Watts and Charles Reed served as pallbearers. Bryant Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

LaVerne Dills

LaVerne Dills, age 72, of Watauga Road, Franklin, N.C., died Wednesday, December 26, 2007 in a local nursing home. She was a native of Macon County, a daughter of the late Lester and Pearl Frady Reed. She was married to the late Ray Dills. She worked as a pharmacist assistant at the Carolina Pharmacy for years, and was a member of the First Pentecostal Assembly of God Church.

She is survived by two step-daughters, Pat Ball of Sun Valley, South Africa and Sherry Sanders of Franklin, N.C.; two step-sons, Mike Smith of Champaign, IL and Mike Dills of Franklin, N.C.; three sisters, Helen Henson and Gloria Younce both of Franklin, N.C. and Norma Hopper of Atlanta, GA; three brothers, Junior Reed of Highlands, N.C., Charles Reed and George Reed both of Franklin, N.C.

Funeral services were held Saturday, Dec. 29 at 3 p.m. at First Pentecostal Assembly of God Church, with Rev. George Patterson and Rev. William Wooten officiating. Burial will be at Mount Moriah Cemetery. Pallbearers will be Robbie Younce, Stanley Reed, Marvin Reed, Sheridan Reed, Mack Hopper and Keith Hopper. Memorials may be made to the First Pentecostal Assembly of God Church, PO Box 644, Franklin, N.C. Bryant Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.
The following is the Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries for the week of Dec. 20-Jan 2.

Dec. 21
- The dept. responded to a call of a brush fire on Carl Chastain Road but it was a controlled burn.
- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on N.C. 106. The victim was transported to the hospital.

Dec. 23
- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on N.C. 106. The victim was transported to the hospital.

Dec. 25
- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Whetstone Drive. A baby was delivered by the EMS crew on Christmas Day.
- The dept. responded twice to alarms at OEI when the sprinkler system went off by accident and once for a false alarm.

Dec. 28
- The dept. responded to a brush fire on N.C. 106 but it was cancelled en route.

Dec. 31
- The dept. responded to a vehicle accident on U.S. 64 east. There were no injuries.
- Jan. 2
- The dept. responded to an alarm at a residence on Cullasaja Club Drive when a water pipe broke and set off the alarm.

RBC Centura sponsors ‘Tribute to teachers’

One of the many things that are GIANT to RBC Centura is a commitment to leadership and overall excellence. That's why it is honoring leaders in the community that do GIANT things every day. Teachers — those outstanding individuals dedicated to enriching students and supplying them with the tools to help build a better future for all of us.

Anyone can nominate a deserving teacher from the Highlands community by clicking on the big pencil on the homepage of the RBC Centura website. Several years ago Highlands School Great Beginnings teacher Jane Chalker won $500 classroom cash for her class. “I would love to see a deserving Highlands teacher win again,” said Sue Gorski, manager of the Highlands RBC Centura bank.

Nominate an elementary or middle school teacher in your community by telling why your teacher (or your children’s teacher) is a leader in the classroom and in the community. RBC Centura wants to reward these teachers for their outstanding leadership. RBC Centura teams in the Southeast region will determine a total of 35 winners based on these nominations for community contribution with demonstrated commitment to educational excellence and enrichment.

The nomination period is Dec. 1, 2007 through March 16, 2008 and each winner will be awarded $500 “Classroom Cash” to be used on learning tools for their classrooms. One grand prize winner will receive a $2,000 shopping spree at Stone’s Education Superstore in Raleigh, NC (travel included).

At the conclusion of the program, RBC Centura’s website will salute and congratulate the winning teachers.

Click www.rbccentura.com for more information and to make a nomination to the “Tribute To Teachers” program.

N-Cryptoku©

**Object:** Assign 9 different letters to each cell of 9 columns and 9 rows. In addition, nine 3 x 3 cells in the layout have the same nine different letters (this is similar to Sudoku but uses nine letters instead of nine numbers). A ‘mystery word or phrase’ using all nine different letters is designated by circled squares (other short words appear when solving, for which a list of meanings is provided). Every puzzle has a different ‘mystery word or phrase’ (no spaces).

**How to Solve:** Determine the nine different letters among those given. Try to solve the mystery word using the clue given and write it in. 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 them with the tools to help build a better future for all of us.

**Solution to Dec. 20 puzzle**

**Mystery Word**

Children’s toy home™

**Across**
1. ___ and behold (2)
2. Above (2)
3. Girl's name (3)
4. Saturate (3)
5. Lick (3)
6. Cut completely off (3)
7. Cunning (3)
8. Poisonous reptile (3)
9. Drag (4)
10. We (obj.) (2)

**Down**
1. RBC Centura sponsors ‘Tribute to teachers’
2. Mystery Word
3. Children’s toy home™
4. Across
5. Down
6. Solution to Dec. 20 puzzle

**Solution to #DN3D in Dec. 20 issue**

| 12 1 | 14 9 21 10 2 |
| 15 4 13 5 26 |
| 18 7 22 25 17 9 |
| 19 11 3 8 24 13 |
| 16 1 20 6 27 16 |
| 10 21 13 5 24 16 |

### PseudoCube©

**#AN1E - Level of Difficulty - Hard**

**Object:** 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 3 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.

**How to Solve:** 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.

**Solution to #DN3D in Dec. 20 issue**

| 1 11 14 7 16 20 13 |
| 12 1 | 14 9 21 10 2 |
| 15 4 13 5 26 |
| 18 7 22 25 17 9 |
| 19 11 3 8 24 13 |
| 16 1 20 6 27 16 |