Ordinances bounced back for discussion

A lot of discussion is bound to take place at the special combination Town Board/Planning Board meeting set for March 24. Up for discussion again — and hopefully so, say those who will be ultimately affected — is the Outdoor Display of Merchandise ordinance and the Zoning Amendment for Restaurant Parking.

Outdoor Display of Merchandise

The Planning Board member and owner of Highlands Outdoor Tools Ricky Bryson said the board sent an ordinance to the Town Board which was disregarded.

“I am here to ask you to rescind,” he said.

Girls soccer team ready to win

Goalie Danielle Reese makes a save during the Towns County game March 6. Highlands lost 1-0 but it was a good game. The next home game is March 14 against Franklin at 5 p.m.

School system responds to negative allegations

Macon County School officials made a final attempt to debunk allegations of reckless spending and unnecessary expansion of facilities at Monday’s quarterly commission meeting.

Superintendent Dan Brigman and school architect Mike Watson used a PowerPoint presentation to explain and clarify statistics and expenses concerning the facilities expansion plan.

Brigman has long claimed and substantiated with statistical information offered at 10 public forums and in the media, the economic benefits of combining the county’s small elementary schools.

The newly formed Citizens for Community Schools and Quality Education organization contends smaller schools are better and questioned the need to build new schools, especially since students will be bused out of their communities.

However, Brigman and the county commission say economics and the right of each student to an education in a modern facility outweighs the negatives and used Cullasaja School as an example.

CPA firm helps county defend its fund balance

Turns out the amount of money in the county’s fund balance account is just enough to shoulder three months of expenses should a catastrophe strike, but not enough to fund capital facilities projects as suggested by fiscal opponents.

During several public sessions over the past year, opponents of capital projects and the means to fund them — basically a tax increase — have suggested the county use the money in the fund balance to fund projects instead of “saving” it.

In a prepared statement at the Monday, March 10 Macon County Commission Chairman Charlie Leatherman said, “Last month at our regular board of commissioners meeting, it was stated that Macon County has a 41% fund balance. That simply put, is not the truth.

“There has been for some time a few who contend that the information coming from this board is infected with dishonesty and the information we release is only to cover up the truth.

“Many are aware of the fact that citizens are concerned with the accountability to insure correction, yet they want to be reassured by the information we release, and represent it to be truthful data, then it becomes the responsibility of those who have the accountability to ensure corrections are in place to counter claims that are not correct.

3. Obituary
4. Wooldridge
5. Another View
6. His & Hers
7. Cooking on the Plateau
8. Upcoming Events
9. Classifieds
10. Fire Log

See PARK POLICY page 18
See ORDINANCES page 18
See SCHOOLS page 5
See FUND BALANCE page 11
Highlands should follow Franklin’s lead

Kim Lewicki
Publisher

In what appeared to be a surprise move last week, the Franklin Town Council voted to levy a 3% room tax and set up a Travel and Tourism Authority (TTA) all its own – apart from the county commission’s TTA.

What does this mean?

Aside from patrons of lodging establishments in the town of Franklin paying 3% more per room than elsewhere in the county, it means that Franklin aldermen figured out a way to raise the money they need to promote tourism in Franklin without having to compete with the chambers of commerce for the money.

Now Franklin can use all of the 3% room tax it collects from Microtel, the Hampton Inn, Comfort Inn, Days Inn and other lodging establishments within its town limits to promote tourism and attract people to Franklin. Plus, it could likely claim some proceeds from the county’s 3% room tax.

Franklin Alderman Verlin Curtis said this wasn’t a surprise move at all. “Two and a half years ago, Franklin applied to the state for the tax,” he said. “We got permission, but the board just now decided to levy it.”

Following a mid-February public hearing, where no one spoke against the notion, the board voted unanimously to adopt the tax at the March 4 town meeting. Curtis said prior to Tuesday’s meeting, he personally called around and still found no one in opposition. That being the case, he decided to vote for the tax.

He said research verified that patrons to cities and towns across the country are accustomed to paying upwards of 10% in room tax, so 6% won’t be alarming.

Like the town of Highlands, over the years the town of Franklin has subsidized organizations and events promoting tourism in Franklin, “but now the money we use to do that won’t have to come out of the general fund,” said Curtis.

Letters-to-the-Editor Policy

We reserve the right to reject or edit submissions. Views expressed are not necessarily those of Highlands’ Newspaper. Please email letters by Monday at 5 p.m. There is a 500-word limit without prior approval.

Destruction shouldn’t be the end-product of trimming

Pat Griffin
Highlands

Dear Editor,

In the Jan. 13 issue of Highlands’ Newspaper there was a letter-to-the-editor entitled “Exactly who is responsible?” If there was a response, then I missed it. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? went to Franklin the other day and it is still there. It seems to me that the company that owned the truck should be responsible for cleaning up and removing what is left of the truck. They should be given a time line to do so with a daily fine (of some substance) each day that goes by past the time line date.

Susan Carlton
Highlands

Will someone please clean up the mess?

Dear Editor,

In the Jan. 13 issue of Highlands’ Newspaper there was a letter-to-the-editor entitled “Exactly who is responsible?” If there was a response, then I missed it. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? went to Franklin the other day and it is still there. It seems to me that the company that owned the truck should be responsible for cleaning up and removing what is left of the truck. They should be given a time line to do so with a daily fine (of some substance) each day that goes by past the time line date.

Pat Griffin
Highlands

Destruction shouldn’t be the end-product of trimming

Dear Editor,

I not only completely agree with Alice Nelson regarding the senseless slaughter of our scenic road sides but am also amazed that more of our nature-loving, conscientious residents have yet to speak up!

It’s easy for me to envision a lazy good-ole-boy riding along, playing macho man on the big bad machine, taking random (and I do mean random) swipes at any far-reaching target that challenges him. Other than how this continues to happen every year, what I fail to grasp is why the results of this major bungle (based on the carnage of flora left in its wake) remain - often indefinitely - leaving behind what appears to be (and is - depending on one’s perspective) a war zone!

Horse Cove has also recently suffered this fate...not to mention the permanent destruction of part of Whiteside Cove - now wide enough for a four-lane highway.

Surely there are better alternatives?

Pat Griffin
Highlands

What’s in a name?

Dear Editor,

American politics is an amazing process; the ideas of the left and the right freely expressed hopefully considered and debated, move this country forward. Especially at times like these, the right and
REVYON TALLEY CARVER

Revylon Talley Carver, age 57, of Franklin, N.C. died March 4, 2008 at an Asheville Hospital. She was born in Rabun County, GA, the daughter of Minnie Leora Carver Talley of Highlands, N.C. and the late Lyman “Red” Talley. She owned and operated Carver’s Cleaning Service.

She loved going to Cades Cove to see the wildlife and do genealogy. She was a member of Central Baptist Church.

She is survived by her husband of 35 years, James Hershel Carver; five sisters, Reba Webb and her husband, Bill of Walhalla, S.C., Rena Carver of Seneca, S.C., Rodean Wilson and her husband, David of Norcross, GA, Roberta Barnes of Millsville, WI and Romonia Picklesimer and her husband, Andrew of Highlands, N.C.; one step-son, Kenneth Carver and wife, Debbie of White Sulphur Springs, MT; five brothers, Ronald Talley and his wife, Hilda of Franklin, N.C., Russel Talley and his wife, Edith of Republic of Panama, Relton Talley and his wife, Hazel of Mountain City, GA and Rabun Talley and his wife, Terry of Gastonia, N.C.; one granddaughter, Rosie Bradley and two great-grandchildren, Madison and Asa Bradley. Several nieces and nephews also survive.

Funeral services were held Friday, March 7 at 11 a.m. at Clear Creek Baptist Church with Rev. Oliver Rice and Rev. Neil Ammons officiating. Burial was in the church cemetery. Chris Bradley, Andrew Picklesimer, Daryl Talley, Brad Hambrick, Bobby Parker, Richard Todd, John Webb and Bob Lambert were pallbearers.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

**MILESTONES**

**Oglethorpe University alumni and friends in the Tampa area joined Jane and William Emerson for a reception and portrait unveiling on Thursday, February 21 at the Tampa Yacht Club. The portrait painted by famed artist Rossin will be hung in Oglethorpe University’s Emerson Student Center. Mr. Emerson has served on the university’s board of trustees since 1974 and is a director of the Merrill Lynch Trust Company.**

**Betz named to Dean’s List**

Katya Betz of Highlands has been named to the Dean’s List for the Fall 2007 semester at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The Dean’s List is made up of full-time students who have achieved between 3.5 and 3.99 grade point average. Katya is the daughter of Richard and Martha Betz of Highlands.

**Highlands Falls Country Club**

$1,629,000

on Big Bear Mountain Road

This incredible true story will be told in three parts. Past issues can be read on line or picked up at the Highlands’ Newspaper 265 Oak St. The names, places and some circumstances are changed to protect everyone’s identity but mine.

I arrived at my office a little after 4 p.m. and found Detective Mike Benson sitting in a hallway chair outside my door. I was surprised to see his usual scruffy, disheveled look was gone. He had washed and combed his coal black hair back into a ponytail and groomed his full beard and mustache. The typical musty smell of his Salvation Army clothing had been replaced with a clean silk Nik Nik shirt and dress slacks. His after-shave lotion permeated the hallway.

Mike was one of my best undercover narcotics officers. He was such a great actor and could fake delirious tremors better than anyone in my unit, convincing street dealers to sell heroin to a complete stranger, something that is practically never done. He just had this look about him that made dealers want to sell him heroin. Month after month, he purchased more drugs and put more dealers behind bars than any of the other officers.

Undercover police officers live by their wits and their ability to act out their role. A bad performance could cost an officer his life. Mike was the best of the best. We had worked many undercover assignments together before my promotion and when that occurred, Mike took the transition from being my partner to being my boss with the professionalism expected of a career officer. He was also a good friend.

This whole scenario was weird, with me following Mike all shined up and waiting to see him. His smile; damn his smile; I am haunted by it. Then I wake up in a sweat. It’s every night, always the same guy who says the same thing. The dreams are so realistic, I am never able to convince myself during the dream that it’s not really happening.

It happened so often, I’m afraid to go to sleep. I am convinced if I don’t quit, I’m going to die. I have a demon in me. This is some kind of omen or something. These dreams have convinced me I am about to be killed. I gotta get outta here.”

Part two of “The Demon” will be published next Thursday.

Read Fred online at www.highlandsinfo.com, scroll down, click on News.
Blessings in our midst

I'm feeling grateful today. Last week I saw a coyote standing just off the side of N.C. 106. A week earlier, I had seen a bobcat crossing N.C. 28. We are so darned lucky to be living here.

We've had a brief respite from our drought and, for the moment at least, the falls are flowing full. We are able to live close to nature while residing in an area that boasts, within easy driving distance, all the services we might reasonably require.

I guess we owe a debt to Teddy Roosevelt for recognizing the importance of our natural treasures, before they were at risk, and to the Forest Service for buying up huge chunks of what was once worthless land.

We are, for the most part, insulated from the crime, congestion, and pollution that plagues our urban neighbors. I remember that on September 11, 2001, I was driving north to Tsali Recreation Area for a day of mountain biking. I heard reports of the terrorist attacks on the radio. So confident was I that my family was safe, that I continued with my plan.

There may be those who consider my decision sacrilegious, enjoying a day of cycling during one of the most tragic events in American history. I'm glad that I didn't witness images of airliners slamming again and again into New York skyscrapers. I never saw the pictures of victims doomed to a fiery end, choosing instead to leap to their deaths. My country was under attack, but my family was safe in Western North Carolina.

I'm grateful for the beauty of our green mountains. Daffodils are blooming in the upstate, so spring cannot be far behind in the mountains. Pure water bubbles from our wells, free of the residue of prescription drugs that plagues those in the cities, remnants of drugs that are excreted by their users, enter the sewage system and through the water treatment plants, only to emerge undetected and be recycled through millions who drink the water.

We enjoy the freedom and prosperity of America, the convenience of proximity to a major metropolitan area and to several smaller cities. I guess there isn't much we lack other than a movie theater and a McDonald's.

I'm grateful for Lizzie and Bull, for friends, colleagues, partners, and readers. I'm very grateful for my profession. At this moment, I'm especially grateful for my health and my life. But that's a story for another time.

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... Schools continued from page 1

example.

"Cullasaja School is at the end of its lifespan," said architect Mike Watson. "Its plumbing and electrical capacity is maxed out."

He said once renovations begin in a school the law says the schools have to be brought up to code. In the case of Cullasaja, Watson said that just isn't possible, citing the lack of additional land, and water and sewer capacity.

Furthermore, codes and ADA requirements have changed over the years. "What was OK 20 years ago isn't OK now," he said. "There are required amenities that just weren't required in the 1940s."

For example, Watson said ADA requirements eat up square footage when it comes to restrooms. "You have to assume a 20% increase in size just to accommodate ADA requirements and mechanical space," he said.

He also said whether a building is worthy of renovation depends on the building itself as well as its infrastructure. "In the case of Cullasaja, it will cost as much to renovate it as to build a new school with no added benefit or means to expand. Currently, Cullasaja School is 17,334 sq. ft. and houses 174 students which costs the county $7,856.69 per student — that's more than it costs to operate the 85,000 sq. ft. Caro- toogehaye Elementary School which was occupied in 2002 and houses twice as many students.

It's a similar scenario for Cowee and Iota. The larger the school the better the profit margin in all the way around from food service on down, said Brigan. "When you bring old schools off-line, there's a savings and improvement of operational costs," he said.

Watson calculated it would cost $3.2 million to renovate Cullasaja to current requirements but water and sewer problems would still exist.

"Renovation would mean addressing the water and sewer problem with one component being the sprinkling of the gym. These days you have to sprinkle the gym, that's all there is to it," he said.

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Please see SCHOOLS page 27
Call for our 2008 Media Pack. Spend your advertising dollar where it will do the most good...in Highlands’ Newspaper!
America’s native criminal class

Mark Twain once remarked that “America has no native criminal class, except perhaps the Congress.” He was exaggerating, but not by too much.

I’ve spent long years in Washington, and worked with many people in the government, both elected and appointed. I’ve observed two central problems: it is so easy, once you’re in a position of power, to casually reach out and line your pockets with the flood of cash that is always flowing by your door.

The other problem is that Washington is inhabited by a large number of people who pull out all the stops, and skated close to the wind to get there. Many, but not all, of those ethically-challenged powers in Washington, are lawyers. It is sad but true that we lawyers are trained to justify the unjustifiable, to defend our clients. When we are our own client, the temptation is at its maximum.

Lastly, of course, is the point that when money is extracted from individuals and corporations and placed in a large pile, it becomes “everybody’s” money. And the simple truth is that nobody is doing a good job of watching everybody’s money. So, you can see the net effect of these related problems. A system that makes it as easy as possible for people to steal money, and attracts the precise people who are least likely to have compunctions about stealing money, you raise up a crop of crooks.

This ain’t rocket science, folks. And that brings us to the (currently) Honorable William Jefferson, D-La., who is facing multiple counts of public corruption. According to numerous and reliable press accounts, Rep. Jefferson was caught on tape accepting a bribe, and most of the bribe money, which was marked, was recovered in a tin-foil package in his home freezer. Gives a whole new meaning to “cold cash.”

Well, what has been the fate of the (somewhat) Hon. William Jefferson? The House Ethics Committee has punted the ball, and postponed any action until his criminal trial is completed. Meantime, the (quasi) Hon. Jefferson is doing all he can to postpone his criminal trial, and is running for reelection in New Orleans, where he will almost certainly win.

The Rules of Conduct for the House do not say that a member has engaged in “conduct unbecoming” only when his last appeal fails in the Supreme Court. For example, U.S. Judge Alcee Hastings of Florida managed to win acquittal of bribery charges while the man who bribed him went to jail. Still, the (formerly) Hon. Alcee Hastings was impeached, convicted, and removed from the bench. Sad to say, he wound up as a member of Congress.

The example I share with you today is the legislature of North Carolina. It does not often serve as a good example. For instance, the former Speaker of the House is now in the Big House, doing time for bribery. And before his conviction, no one could lay a finger on him. But this week, there is honorable news from that legislature.

This week a special legislative committee recommended that state Rep. Thomas Wright be “removed from office for mishandling about $340,000 in campaign contributions, loans and charitable donations.” That will go to the General Assembly, which can then expel Rep. Wright.

Where the U.S. House failed, the N.C. House has succeeded. Rep. Wright is charged with various crimes, but the special committee did not wait for the criminal case to play out. If the General Assembly accepts the recommendation, the (disgraced) Rep. Wright will be out of his ear, before he can be reelected to the N.C. House.

Since Wright is a Democrat, and Democrats control both the N.C. House and the special committee, the outcome seems clear. Rep. Wright will be gone with the wind because the Democrats in N.C. are at least partially more concerned about integrity in elected office, than are the Democrats who control the U.S. House.

One final, personal note. If I am elected to Congress this fall, in my first day in office I will write a personal letter to each member of the House Ethics Committee, demanding that they either a) promptly on the charges against the (dubiously) Hon. William Jefferson, or b) resign from their positions so that others who take bribery in the House more seriously, can take their places.

First Presbyterian Church of Highlands

Holy Week 2008

Sunday, March 16, 2008
11:00 a.m.
“Passion Palm Sunday Communion Service”
Sermon by Dr. Don Mullen

Friday, March 21, 2008
12:00 noon
“Stations of the Cross”
Sponsored by the churches of Highlands.
Meet at Our Lady of the Mountain.

Saturday, March 22, 2008
6:30 a.m.
“Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service”
Sponsored by the churches of Highlands.
Service held at the Highlands’ Biological Center Amphitheater. Sermon by Rev. Hunter Coleman

Sunday, March 23, 2008
9:30 a.m. Sunday School Church School at the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation
Call 828-526-3175 for more information.

Mark Kayser, Interim Pastor
Highlands, NC 28741

Dr. Don Mullen, Parish Associate
Bryson's Food Store

We have what you want for Easter...

Easter Lilies, holiday baking and culinary needs...
Special meat cuts and baked goods to order...

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Cooking on the Plateau

Eggs in a Nest
A wonderful breakfast or brunch.
Servings: 4
Cooking Time: 20 Minutes
6 tablespoons butter, melted
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 sheets phyllo dough, thawed
4 eggs
Salt and pepper
2 tablespoons water or sour cream
1 tablespoon butter
Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter 4 muffin cups. In small bowl, combine melted butter and garlic. On cutting board, stack 3 phyllo sheets and cut into fourths, forming 12 squares. Cover phyllo with damp paper towel when not in use because it dries out quickly. Press 1 phyllo square (1 sheet thick) into bottom of each muffin cup. (Don’t worry if phyllo tears.) Brush with butter. Add another layer of phyllo and brush with butter. Repeat a third time. Bake 10 minutes. Carefully remove phyllo baskets from muffin cups and cool on wire rack.

In medium bowl beat eggs; add salt and pepper to taste with water or sour cream. Melt 1 tablespoon butter in medium skillet and add eggs. Sprinkle ham over eggs. Scramble eggs to desired doneness. Sprinkle in cheese and stir until melted. Spoon into phyllo baskets. Sprinkle tops with a little more cheese.

Serving Suggestions: Serve with Tater Tots.

Come for brunch, y’all
Make it an Easter Sunday and any Sunday brunch!

Banana & Bacon Stuffed French Toast
France comes to Savannah in this French toast stuffed with crispy bacon, ripe banana and creamy mascarpone.
Servings: 6
Cooking Time: 15 Minutes
1 (500 grams) loaf brioche (substitute egg bread)
1 package mascarpone (substitute cream cheese)
3 to 4 bananas, sliced lengthwise (each banana should yield 4 slices)
1 pound Smithfield Bacon, cooked until crisp
6 eggs
1/2 cup milk
1/2 cup heavy cream
1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon orange zest
Pinch salt
Pinch pepper
6 tablespoons butter
Pure maple syrup, warmed
1 pint fresh berries for garnish
Powdered sugar for dusting

Slice brioche into 6 slices approximately 1 inch wide. Cut each slice almost all the way in half leaving a “hinged” edge. Spread thin layer of mascarpone on inside of one side of each slice. Lay two banana slices and cooked bacon on mascarpone. Press brioche together. In large bowl add eggs, milk, cream, cinnamon, vanilla, orange zest, salt and pepper. Whisk to combine. Melt butter in large skillet or on griddle. Working in batches, dip each stuffed brioche into egg mixture, being careful not to allow bacon and bananas to fall out. Grill on each side until golden brown.

Pour maple syrup on large plate and place 1 piece stuffed brioche on syrup. Sprinkle fresh berries on top of brioche and dust entire plate with powdered sugar.

Recipes courtesy of Family Features
New commissioners and mayor attend ‘school of government’

Continuing education is a vital part of any profession and elected government work is no exception. Last week our two new town commissioners, Buz Dotson, Larry Rogers, our administrator, Richard Betz, and I attended the Essentials of Municipal Government three day course at the Grove Park Inn in Asheville North Carolina is fortunate to have two outstanding organizations which put this fine event on six times a year in different locations in the State.

The School of Government, part of the University of NC in Chapel Hill, and the NC League of Municipalities, located in Raleigh, together put this outstanding program on. The SOG is always active not only teaching the details of properly run government but the professors there are always available by telephone or e-mail to answer questions for local elected officials on matters of procedure and the law.

The NC League of Municipalities this year is celebrating 100 years of service to the city and county governments of the state. It was formed in 1908 by a group of mayors to work not only with local governments but to protect their interest in the legislature of the state of North Carolina. The Town of Highlands joins over 500 municipalities and counties in the state as members of this organization. They also handle insurance issues for the town.

At the meeting in Asheville last week such topics as the roles and responsibilities of elected officials in a democratic society, what cities and towns do and how they do it, financial management and legal aspects of efficiency and openness were all presented and discussed in an expert fashion. We also heard presentations on the differences in the types of local government such as Mayor-Council and Council-Manager type organizations. The Town of Highlands commissioners currently are studying possible changes in our form of government in the future, so this meeting was quite timely.

The meeting also is important in that your local officials can network with other local officials discussing the ways they conduct their business. Thus, we attempt to make local government even more efficient in the way we do things. There is always discussion regarding press relationships and the problems public officials have in “living in a fish bowl.” Methods of conducting the council’s business in more effective ways and yet being fair to everyone always come up at this important meeting. This is the third one I have been to, and I always come away having learned a great deal and tried to utilize this in my leadership of our own town government.

Let me once again congratulate the cast and supportive staff of the Highlands Community Players in their production of the hilarious play “Lend Me a Tenor,” over the past two weekend at the Performing Arts Center. I do not know when I have enjoyed a performance any more than this one. The talent of these actors was phenomenal from the most experienced to the newcomers. This was Bob Tietze’s first go at performing (on stage!) in 30 years and he pulled it off like a real pro. Watch out Hollywood — another John Wayne is in the making. Others on stage also did a marvelous job.

• See MULLEN page 18
March has always been an enjoyable time for me. The crocuses (croc if you prefer) stick their heads up, my pear tree goes into budding mode and my cat patrols the property, sensing mole activity. Soon my rickety old body will defrost and the prospect of steaming hot weather is on the horizon. Hurrah! But enough about me.

The bimbo front has been eerily quiet lately. Our favorite wacko chicks, Britney, Lindsay and Paris have provided nothing newsworthy (as if anything they do is newsworthy). Seems like March madness is operating in reverse in their case. But then, the month is still young. The Democrats can be depended on to provide madness when all else fails. With Hillary’s recent victories in Texas and Ohio, the Obama Express seems to have slowed. What appears to be brewing is a train wreck of 1968 proportions.

For those of you who can’t remember anything that took place in the 60s, or you weren’t born yet, the Democrat Convention, held in August in Chicago, created riots in the streets over the split in the party over the Vietnam war. The radicals’ “pull out immediately” choice, Eugene McCarthy, lost to Hubert Humphrey, who won the nomination without participating in any primaries (can we say smoke-filled back rooms?). He eventually lost to Richard Nixon.

Many weeks ago, I told you about the parties fiddling around with their primaries in certain states, namely Florida and Michigan, moving their dates up to make their states more relevant to the process. The Democrats in those states have a nomination without participating in any primaries (can we say smoke-filled back rooms?). He eventually lost to Richard Nixon.

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Now that the primary season is in the home stretch, and only about 100 delegates separate Obama and Clinton, those delegations have taken on added importance. The Dem’s biggies are trying to change the rules in the middle of the game and are contemplating “do-overs.” If the rules are allowed to be changed, there will be extreme angst in the ranks. If they are not, the “disenfran-chised”

- CONSERVATIVE POV -

Don Swanson
Feedback is encouraged. Email swandonson@dnet.net

Spring is springing – Huzzah

Democrat voters will be steamed. Now they are battling over who should pay for a redo if one occurs (the cost of which is estimated to be $17-25 million in Florida alone). This is so much fun.

Since it is statistically unlikely that either candidate will garner enough “pledged delegates” to reach the number needed for victory, the “super delegates” come into play. Unless the magic number is reached by June 5th, the 800 or so super (party officials, elected officials, etc.) will determine the Nominee. About half of them have already declared for one or the other, which makes the remaining available super delegate votes very valuable. They are fair game and their votes can be bought. The problem the National Party faces in this process, should it come to pass, is that if the super in total vote against the “people,” that is the pledged delegates, all heck will break loose.

As entertaining as the next several weeks will be, watching the two camps burning campaign funds and clawing each other’s eyes out, let us not lose sight of the fact that there isn’t a nickel’s worth of difference in their political philosophy. If eventually elected, God forbid, either would take the Country down their socialist road and effectively end the American Dream.

At a time when inflation is rearing its ugly head and the economy is dragging anchor, raising taxes and increasing regulations, promised by both, is not the answer. They’ll say that the wealthiest among us should bear the burden of the middle-class. Two things will emerge. You thought you were part of the middle class. You will soon learn that somehow you have become one of the wealthy they are talking about. Congratulations. The truly wealthy, that is, those who produce value and provide jobs, will continue their exodus to offshore locations, leaving the People’s Republic of America to feed on itself.

An even scarier scenario, call it a nightmare, continues to cross my mind. The Convention is locked, Chairman Howard Dean freezes and screams pandemonium breaks out and in rides Al Gore on his white horse to break the tie. It’s me, he shouts; it’s me, me, mine.

Pop Quiz! A. Hillary; B. Obama; C. Gore; D. None of the above. It had better be D!
Bryan Starnes, of Martin & Starnes CPA, explained fund balances in accounting procedures at Monday's Macon County Commission meeting.

“To clear up any misunderstandings, Bryan Starnes with Martin, Starnes & Associates, will hopefully put an end to the matter of Macon County's fund balance.”

Using a PowerPoint presentation, Starnes, who represents the CPA firm that has audited the county for several years, explained the ins and outs of fund balance – the budget category under attack, lately.

Foremost, he explained that a fund balance is a moving target and the amount at the beginning of the fiscal year is different than the amount at the end — something Finance Director Evelyn Southard has explained several times.

Macon County's available fund balance on June 30, 2007 was $15,407,847 after budgeted expenses of $43,929,774 and appropriations and commitments not yet appropriated equaled $4,697,839. This left $10,710,008 as the available fund balance or 24%.

Starnes said a fund balance is a percentage of prior year expenditures plus transfers out. He stressed that the 42% fund balance reported at the beginning of the fiscal year, didn’t take into account transfers out of the fund.

“The T for transfers should really be an E for expenditures because that’s what a transfer is,” he said. “If you take into account the transfers out of the fund balance your available fund balance is 24% not 42%.”

Starnes explained that though it’s a policy and not a law, the Local Government Commission (LGC) suggests a minimum fund balance of 8%. “Now that’s the minimum level, not the recommended level,” he said. “It represents one month’s expenses of ready cash. If you collected all taxes and paid all the bills in a 12-month period, not including long-term debt, it’s how much you would have left over.”

But he said it’s still not cash in the bank because a fund balance is made up of three components called a reserve, a designated and an unreserved undesignated. The reserved fund balance is anything outside Macon County that places restrictions on the county’s money – mainly the state. “For instance, there is a three-month lag in sales tax from the state and there are uncollected property taxes. Those don’t represent ready cash, but it will be coming in but it is in reserve.

The designated fund balance represents internal restrictions. “It's available, but it’s already spoken for,” he said.

Then there's the unreserved, undesignated fund balance which is totally available within a 12-month period.

He reiterated what Southard and previous County Manager Sam Greenwood have said many times — one reason Macon County qualifies for low interest debt issues is because of its healthy fund balance.

Starnes said if a fund balance dips below 8%, everything begins to shut down — not only pricing for debt issues but the entity becomes the target of the LGC. “Then you come to realize that their ‘policy’ of 8% has actually become a law because you can’t function,” he said. “The LGC sees government from getting into trouble.”

Some years ago, the Macon County Commission set a policy of a 25% fund balance and Starnes said that was a good move.

“At the very least you have to have a policy,” he said. “Boards and opinions change and that can cause problems.”

He said a fund balance policy represents some sort of financial stability.

Money in a fund balance should be used for non-recurring expenditures, “upfront” money for capital projects, when opportunity knocks – like when a county gets a chance to secure a piece of property for a school. “A county can’t borrow money unless it is putting a structure on it,” said Starnes. “Having a healthy fund balance allows you to take advantage of an opportunity.”

Fund balance money can also be used after a natural disaster like Peek’s Creek where FEMA money was slow in coming, and following economic disasters when state commitments are slow in coming or dry up completely, he said.

Starnes said fund balance money should not be used to pay for recurring operating expenses, reducing a low interest rate debt, for instance, because you can’t borrow it back, nor should it be used to make up for ineffective budgeting.

“Basically, it’s taken Macon County 200 years to accumulate a $15,407,847 fund balance,” he said. “Some years it will dip and some years it will grow.”

The county's lowest fund balance was in 2003 when it hit $6,012,139. Since then it has been growing at a healthy, steady rate which has enabled the county to build schools and other facilities needed by the growing county as well as expand services like EMS and law enforcement.

Starnes said of the 27 counties his firm audits, only one county is better off than Macon County. “This is a testament to your county’s financial office,” he said. “Once your fund balance is depleted, counties have a hard time growing in it back.”

“So basically, if the bottom falls out, Macon County could go on for three months,” said Leatherman. “We’ve prepared for the future, good or bad. In a nutshell, this board and prior boards have prepared a three-month cushion.”

Commissioner Brian McClellan said he thought a 25% fund balance was reasonable and gave the county the level of flexibility it needs.

Leatherman also reminded the citizenry that the county still has the lowest tax rate in the state at 24.5 cents and invited anyone taking issue with the findings of Martin and Starnes to release their data findings, information and methodology of calculations to them and take the relative matters up with them.
Cashiers Rotary supports hospital

PM Wednesday March 5, Russell Harris, Executive Director of the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital Foundation received a check from Vic Galef, president of the Rotary Club of Cashiers Valley to help fund the free health clinics. This is the Rotary Club of Cashiers Valley’s second healthcare partnership in as many months. Rotary will be aiding in the funding and staffing of future bi-annual health screenings, offered free of charge by Highlands-Cashiers Hospital to residents of Cashiers, Glenville, and Sapphire. The screenings are scheduled for May 17 and October 4 at Blue Ridge School.

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**HIGHLANDS EATERIES**

**SportsPage**
- Sandwich Shoppe
- 314 Main Street • 526-3555
- Mon.-Sat. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. (Closed Tuesday)
- Soups • Salads • Sandwiches
- Desserts • Loaded Baked Potatoes
- Now Open

**Buck’s Coffee Cafe**
- Open 7 days a week 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- 384 Main Street
- Coffee, tea, wine, pastries, sandwiches

**High Country Cafe**
- Breakfast & Lunch 6:30 a.m. to 2 p.m
- Sunday through Friday
- 526-0572
- Cashiers Road next to the Community Bible Church

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**Pescado’s Burritos**
- In the middle of 4th St.
- ...on the hill
- Open for lunch Mon-Sat
- Open for dinner Mon-Fri
- 526-9313

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**H-C Hospital’s ER director takes job at Park Ridge Hospital**

The part-time director of emergency medicine at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital for the past year is leaving the position later this month to take a full-time position at another area hospital.

Dr. Anthony L. “Tony” Fisher, who has been director of emergency services at the hospital here since last February and also worked as an emergency room physician one day per week, has already taken a full-time position with Park Ridge Urgent Care, a part of Park Ridge Hospital in Fletcher, NC. Fisher has worked part-time at Park Ridge Urgent Care since it opened four years ago. While he actually began his new duties at Park Ridge on March 1, his last day at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital will be March 19.

“We are disappointed to be losing Tony, but we certainly wish him well in his new position,” said hospital President and CEO Ken Shull. “During his time with us, he has helped to strengthen our emergency services program, and we are already searching for another physician who is board-certified in emergency medicine to take on that role for us.”

Shull said ER physicians on the hospital’s staff are available to fill in on the day Fisher covers the ER. The hospital’s ER is staffed 24/7 by an on-site provider.

A native of Rosman, NC, Fisher was a long-time resident of Lake Toxaway before moving to Brevard last year. Prior to joining Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, he had been a full-time emergency physician and the medical director of the Emergency Department at Transylvania Community Hospital in Brevard.

“I’ve enjoyed being a part of emergency medicine at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, and working with the board and administration here,” said Fisher on Monday. “However, the position at Park Ridge is full-time and closer to home.”

Fisher earned his medical degree from the University of North Carolina Medical School in Chapel Hill in 1994 and did his residency in emergency medicine at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, MA.

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**LETTERS continued from page 20**

**To the angry white man**

Dear Editor,

So you’re angry, you vocal man who is also white.

Although men of that profile have held the power long tight.

You’re of the group that’s (still) in charge,

With numbers in boardrooms and offices large.

It’s up to 43 in the White House ...

ain’t that right?

When to such generalities you even self assign,

Thinking narrow, the whole of the person you much malign.

We’re the sum of ALL parts;

Some parts beauty, some parts warts.

More than race, gender and emotion is everyone’s intricacy of design.

Karen Hawk
Highlands
Keep it personal

**SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING**

**Spiritually Speaking**

They say that death comes in threes. It’s just a mythic legend of sorts – not verifiable by any scientific data. I found it to be the case last month, though. It started when a friend and colleague of mine in the ministry, Paul Thompson, lost his wife, Susan. He now is left to rear his three daughters – 11, 14, and 17 – by himself.

Two days later I received word that a friend of mine who used to serve as the priest of Trinity Episcopal Church in Spruce Pine, David Rose, lost his wife, Cam, in a car accident in Vermont. David is also left to rear three daughters by himself.

Three days after that my wife’s aunt, Peggy, died unexpectedly of a heart-related problem. Peggy’s only child is old enough to be on his own, but the saddest part of this death is that Peggy’s mother, Charlie Mae, is still living. At the fragile age of 93, she had to try and comprehend the death of her child.

Since I’ve been to a number of funerals recently, I’ve noticed that they are becoming increasingly sterile and impersonal rituals of passage. There always seem to be a rush to get the whole thing over with as soon as possible. I can’t tell you the number of times I’ve heard about the death of someone I considered a close friend well after the funeral has taken place. Sometimes it’s a family member prodding the procession, sometimes a minister, most always a funeral home.

If there is a graveside service, the harsh realities of “ashes to ashes, dust to dust” are covered by a piece of green carpet. Somewhere along the way, funeral directors decided that it’s just not polite or sympathetic to leave the bare earth showing. And these cemetery services are becoming increasingly brief; a Scripture verse or two, a prayer, committing the body to ground and the soul to God, maybe a song, and a benediction and there you have it! Completed, usually, in seven minutes or less.

The funeral service is losing precedence to the memorial service. The difference between the two is basically whether or not the body of the deceased is present. Cremation and organ donation necessitates more memorial services than in days gone by. Not to mention that it’s expensive to embalm and preserve a body for a funeral.

There’s a lot of discussion about whether a eulogy is appropriate. Some theologians and liturgical scholars believe that to eulogize a person is to distract from the main purpose of a funeral/memorial service to proclaim the Christian belief in the resurrection. I’ve been to enough funerals in which the homily, meditation, sermon (whatever that thing is that pastors

**PLACES OF WORSHIP**

**Blue Valley Baptist Church**
Rev. Oliver Rice, Pastor (706) 782-3965
Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 11
Sundays night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7
Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting - 7 p.m.

**Buck Creek Baptist Church**
Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 11
First Saturday: Singing at 7:30 p.m.

**Chapel of the Sky Valley**
Sky Valley, Georgia
The Right Rev. Dr. John S. Erbelding, Pastor
Church: 706-746-2999
Pastor’s residence: 706-746-5770
Sundays: 10 a.m. - Worship
Holy Communion 1st Sunday of the month
Wednesdays: 9 a.m. Healing and Prayer with Holy Communion each service

**Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints**
NC 28 N. and Pine Ridge Rd., (828) 369-8229
Rai Cemack, Branch President, (828) 369-1627

**Christ Anglican Church**
Rev. Cass Daly • Office - 526-2320
Sunday: Holy Communion – 11 a.m.
(Highlands Community Center on. U.S. 64 next to the ballfield in Highlands
Monday: Evening Bible Study at 6 p.m.
Wednesday: Men's Bible study at 8 a.m.
at First Baptist Church
Pot Luck Lunch last Sunday of each month.

**Clear Creek Baptist Church**
Pastor Everett Brewer
Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 11
Evening Service - 1st & 3rd Sunday – 7 p.m.

**Community Bible Church**
www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685
3645 U.S. 64 east, Highlands
Sundays: 9:30 a.m. Sunday School, 10:45 Worship;
6:30 p.m. High School Group
Wednesdays: 5:30 p.m. Supper (free for kids 8th grade and under); 6:15 p.m., Adult Bible Study; 6:30 p.m. programs for students.

Thursdays: 9:30 a.m. Women’s Bible Study

**Episcopal Church of the Incarnation**
The Rev. Brian St. John, Pastor • 526-2968
Sunday: Breakfast; 9 A.M • Sunday School
10:30 A.M. Holy Eucharist (Rite II)
Sunday Service on Channel 14 at 10:30 A.M.
Monday: 4 P.M. Women's Cursillo Group
Tuesday: 8 A.M. Men's Cursillo Group
4:30 P.M. Education for Ministry
Wednesday: 6:30 PM. Choir Practice
Thursday: 10 A.M. Holy Eucharist (Chapel)
10:30 A.M. Daughters of the King
• Sunday Service on Channel 14 Sun. at 10:30 a.m.

**First Alliance Church of Franklin**
Rev. Mitch Schultz, Pastor • 828-369-7977
Sun. Worship 8:30 & 10:45 a.m.; 6 p.m. (nursery provided)
Sun. school for all ages 9:45 a.m.
Wed. dinner 5 p.m. followed by children's Pioneer Club 6 p.m.; Jr & Sr Youth Group 6:30 p.m.;
Adult Bible Study & Prayer Meeting 7 p.m.
Small groups available throughout the week.

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

**First Presbyterian Church**
Rev. Mark Kayser, Interim Pastor
Dr. Don Mullen, Parish Associate 526-3175
Mondays: 8 a.m. - Men's Bible Discussion & Breakfast
Tuesdays: 10 a.m. - Seekers
Choir - 7

**Highlands Assembly of God**
Sixth Street
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study – 7

**Highlands Seventh Day Adventist Church**
Wednesday evening prayer & Bible Study
Call Lloyd Kidder at 526-9474

**Highlands United Methodist Church**
Senior Pastor Todd Struble; Asst. Pastor Mike Harris
526-3376
Suns.: school 9:45 a.m.; Worship 11 a.m.;
5 p.m. Youth Group
Wed: Supper; 6:15 - children, youth, & adults
studies; 6:15 - Adult choir
(nursery provided for Wed. p.m. activities)
Thurs:12:30 - Women’s Bible Study (nursery)
HOLO Family Lutheran Church – ELCA
Chaplain Margaret Howell
2152 Dillard Road - 526-9741
Sundays: Worship/Communion – 10:30
HEALING SERVICE on the 5th Sunday of the month.

**Little Church of the Wildwood**
Services at the Church in the Wildwood in Horse Cove. Sundays at 7 p.m. through Labor Day. Dress is casual.

**Macedonia Baptist Church**
8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in Satolah
Pastor Jamie Passmore, (706) 782-8130
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
Choir - 6 p.m.
Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg. – 7 p.m.

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

**Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church**
Rev. Tien, Priest
Parish office, 526-2418
Sundays: Mass - 11 a.m.
Saturday Mass: 4 p.m.
(for last Sunday of October)

**Scalby Mountain Baptist Church**
Rev. Clifford Willis
Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 11 a.m. & 7
Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg. - 7 p.m.

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

**Shortoff Baptist Church**
Pastor Rev. Wayne Price
Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 11
Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study – 7

**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship**
2152 Dillard Road – 526-9741

**Whiteside Presbyterian Church**
Cashiers, Rev. Sam Forrester, 743-2122

*See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 15*
Highlands School middle school baseball team

Not pictured are:
Tyler Converse
Tyler Owens &
Coach Christine Murphy

The next home games are against
Saturday, March 15 at noon
against Tamasee/Salem, Monday,
March 24 at 3:30 p.m. against
Fairview and
Thursday, March 27 at 3:30 against
Scotts Creek.

Photos by Noel Atherton
The Junior Beta Club of Highlands Middle School held its annual induction service on Tuesday, March 4. The new members are eighth-grade students Juliane Buras, Emily Munger, Logan Schmitt, and Cody St. Germain, and seventh-grade students Kalyn Billingsley, Rebecca Johnson, and Alexandra Potter. The officers, Kim Machuca, Emily Murphy, Danielle Shomper, and Kaitlin Lewis, conducted the candlelight induction service. Students eligible for Junior Beta have outstanding performance in both academics and citizenship. Mrs. Michelle Lane is the sponsor. Photo by Carol Bowen

Six Webelo Scouts from Pack 207 Highlands were presented with their Arrow of Light award at the annual Blue and Gold Banquet. The Arrow of Light is the highest award a Cub Scout can achieve and it represents their journey through cubscouting. Following the ceremony the Webelos then participated in a Crossover ceremony to Boy Scouts Troop 207. Pictured in the back row from left: Kenan Lewis, Alex Bronaugh, Philip Murphy. In the front row from left: Taylor Schmitt, Carter Potts, Craig Dalton.

Mike Breedlove, representative from the Macon Soil and Water Conservation District, announced the Highlands School winners of the Essay and Poster Contest. The theme for this year's contest was “We All Live in a Watershed.” The contest was open to all students in the sixth grade. The winners were Tatiana Schmitt, poster; Emily Shuler, poster and essay; and Nadya Rogers, poster and essay. Mrs. Sara Mayer is their teacher.

Students inducted to Jr. Beta

Students win essay & poster contest

... SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING from page 13

say after the Scripture reading) is so generic that you could insert anyone’s name and you wouldn’t be able to tell the difference.

When my grandfather died, I was hopeful that there would be a few stories about his unique character: how he always hid his stash of Hershey’s chocolate (only to have grandma whisper to us the newest hiding place); how he was so thrifty it was like he threw nickels around like they were manhole covers (we weren’t allowed to flush the toilet unless absolutely necessary because he had to pay for that town water); how he would always yell at the neighborhood kids for running through his yard to get to the playground behind his house (but he would always mow a path for them to walk on through); or how he would get so mad every time President Nixon came on the news that he would curse at the TV (and grandpa was not, by nature, a cussing man).

But when it came time for the pastor to speak at grandpa’s funeral, all the pastor could say was that grandpa was a man “who loved to go camping” and who “enjoyed bowling.” I felt robbed by the feeble and paltry remembrance. Besides, grandpa didn’t start camping until he retired and he hated putting up that old Viking pop-up. And grandpa wasn’t too keen on bowling because he

* See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 19

Kilwin’s Chocolates & Ice Cream

Hippity Hoppity
Kilwin’s has your Easter candy!

Come guess the number of jelly beans and win a 22-pound milk chocolate Easter bunny!

Spring Hours!
Monday -- Thursday: 11 a.m. until 6 p.m.
Friday and Saturday: 11 a.m. until 9 p.m.
Closed Sundays
(828) 526-3788

NATIONWIDE SHIPPING
One of the things that comes with the territory of having a two-year-old is having to deal with the numerous children’s videos that she enjoys watching. It varies from day to day, as I have endured everything from Wiggles (saccharine sweet) to Teletubbies (whoever came up with this is definitely smoking some good stuff) to Barney (Dear God). Currently, her weapon of choice is Veggie Tales, which I enjoyed the first 100 times before the endless refrains began sapping my will to live. Fortunately, I came up with an idea to help make things more palatable.

The Ballad of Kevin Love (sung to the tune of His Cheeseburger)

Kevin said to her “I’d like a cheeseburger.”
“He and I might like a milkshake as well.”
She said to him “we’re closed come back later.”
He said “But can’t u see I’m with Dick Vitale?”
She said “My gosh, please don’t let them in now.”
“Vitale will take all our oxygen.”
Love yelled to her “Kevin’s very hungry!”
“And there’s no way I will wait until then.
He needs a cheeseburger
A Yes! cheeseburger
And he’ll eat LA if he doesn’t get one
He wants his cheeseburger
A tasty cheeseburger
One with real cow, not those fakey veggies!
A Pittsburgh Pirates fan’s lament (sung to the tune of The Pirates Who Don’t Do Anything)
Oh we’re the Pirates, who don’t do anything
And if you ask us, to do anything
We’ll just tell you, we won’t do anything
Oh we’ve never won in Cleveland, and we’ve never won in Denver
And we’ve never pitched a shutout in St. Louis or St. Paul
And we’ve never won in Philly and we’ve never won in Tampa
And we’ll never play with Boston in the fall
Cuz we’re the Pirates, who don’t do anything.
We don’t win at home, or on the road
And if you ask us, to win anything
Well just tell you, we don’t win at all
We’ve never won in the poop deck
And we never have some all-star’s
Cuz we sell them every fall
And we’re borderline pathetic
Cuz our mascot is a Parrot
And we’ll never meet with Boston in the fall
The Hansbrough Song (Sung to the tune of The Hairbrush Song)
Our curtain opens as Coach K, having just finished his morning bath (complete with “color safe” shampoo)
And having just received the news that
The Mountain Garden Club looks back

by Janet Allison Sossomon

At the February meeting of the Mountain Garden Club, a history of the Club was presented by Virginia Worley, Lee Updegraft, Isabel Chambers, Midge Rothermel and Jolene Niblack. Many of the major highlights and projects throughout the years were described, beginning when the Club was formed in 1979.

In 1979, the Mountain Garden Club was formed when it “spun-off” from the joint club known as the Highlands-Cashiers Garden Club. Twenty-eight women became charter members. By 1980, the Club was approved for Federation, being sponsored by the Kenilworth Garden Club in Asheville.

The Mountain Garden Club has always had fund raisers to benefit the community. In 1981, the Club had its first booth at the Hospital Bazaar. Beginning in 1988, members began designing and making quilts for the Hospital Bazaar. Each member embroidered one or two squares, each square displayed some of 45 different native flowers. The quilts were raffled off and proceeds benefited the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital for many years. Up until 2004, the Club also held a Fall Bazaar. Items sold were jellies, jams, etc., and later members made flavored rice in wine bottles to sell.

The Mountain Garden Club Plant Sale began around 1981, and was in full swing by 1990. The first sale was held at the Highlands Recreation Park. Also in 1981, the Club started “Blooming Sunday” during which flower arrangements were sold. The money was used to beautify the Community Building, including planting a red maple tree, pine trees, flowering peach trees, and flowering pear trees, all still blooming today.

The Plant Sale continues today as the single major fund raiser for the Club. At the first Plant Sale, each member contributed 20 plants. Later, and at present, members hold fun and timesaving plant “digs” where members get together at various private properties to dig many, many native plants for the sale.

The 2008 annual Mountain Garden Club Plant Sale will be held the Saturday of Memorial Day Weekend at the Ballpark in Highlands.

The Mountain Garden Club has always planted trees to beautify the area. In the early 1980s a maple was planted at Highlands School, a hickory tree was planted on Hickory Street, and an elm tree was planted on Elm Street. Members also planted many trees provided by the Forest Service; these trees were planted on the Osage Mountain Overlook on NC 106 and on the Blue Valley Overlook on NC 28.

The Club also started Highlands’ first litter pick up in 1982. Also involved in the project were the Rotary Club, the Lions Club, the Jaycees, the Women’s Club, Highlands School 6th and 7th graders, the Laurel Garden Club (starting in 1983), and other individuals.

In 1983, the Mountain Garden Club began the beautification of the grounds of Town Hall, planting and maintaining many flowers and trees. Also in 1983, the Mountain Garden Club sponsored the Laurel Garden Club, another garden club in Highlands. In 1985, the Mountain Garden Club established yet another new garden club at the Ensey Rest Home in Sylva, NC.

Also in 1985, the Rainbow Coalition was formed with the Mountain Garden Club, the Laurel Garden Club, and the Highlands-Cashiers Garden Club. The Coalition planted over 1,300 bulbs, beautifying Highlands and Cashiers. Also in 1985, 36 Dunston hybrid chestnut trees around Highlands. Thanks to the Mountain Garden Club and the rest of the Rainbow Coalition, in 1985, the first week of June was proclaimed National Garden Club Week in Highlands.

The Mountain Garden Club also formed a Junior Garden Club, being one of only two clubs in its district to do this. The Jr. Club was called the “Hummers” and was made up of 5th and 6th graders from Highlands School. Club members helped the Hummers set up planters with flowers on Main Street. They also planted flowers in the Butterfly Garden and made Mother’s Day Plants.

Another group started by the Mountain Garden Club, in cooperation with the Laurel Garden Club, was the Land Stewards of the Highlands Plateau. Stated generally, the Land Stewards focus on projects that emphasize, nurture, and preserve the unique environment and natural heritage of our mountains.

Today, the Mountain Garden Club continues to donatet ime, plants, flowers, and funds to various projects. Some of these include the Cherokee Garden at the Highlands Nature Center, the grounds at the Highlands Historic House, the Highlands Middle School Picnic area, and the Butterfly Garden at the Highlands High school (started in 1995 and also supported by other grants).

Since before 1994, creating and funding scholarships has been a major part of the Mountain Garden Club’s community service. A special project for the summer programs at the Nature Center were also provided by the Club.

In 2007, the Club held a program on flower arranging and held its first Flower Show. Experienced judges awarded various awards to members for their work. That year, members also took field trips to gardens, waterfalls, and the like. Starting years back and continuing to date, on members’ birthdays the Club donates to state gardens such as the Daniel Boone Native Garden and the Elizabethan Garden.

The Mountain Garden Club doesn’t rest during the holidays, either. At every Highlands Christmas Parade, the members entertain as dancing gardeners. At the first parade, in 1999, the Club’s dancing theme was “Let Us Hoe.” The dance has won hearts and recognition each year, including winning the name of the “dancing babies” in 2007. In previous years, the Club worked at the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, making wreaths for long-term care patients’ doors and decorating large Christmas trees. Today, the Club continues to have their annual Christmas party, which always includes a project to benefit others. In 2007, members brought gifts to give to children through the International Friendship Center and the Highlands Emergency Council. Around 1990, members also participated in the downtown Halloween Celebration, handing out goodies and flowers to children.

The Mountain Garden Club has won many awards over the years. The first of these was in 1992, for the Main Street planters project by the Hummers. The Hummers received even more awards from 1993 through 2000. Other awards of the Club include: 2 Petal Grants, one in 1995 and one in 1997; Best Public School Beautification (won twice and once won an award); Club of the Year for clubs 19-40 (won three times); Bird Award; Butterfly Garden; Best Five Year History (for 1999-2003); Conservation Award (Land Stewards); Landscape Design Award (Butterfly Garden); Membber of the Year; and many others.

In 2004, Club members donated generously toward signs for the Nature Center at the Highlands Biological Station. The signs describe the types of birds attracted by the center’s towers. Funds to purchase a special projector for the summer programs at the Nature Center were also provided by the Club.

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In 2007, the Club held a program on flower arranging and held its first Flower Show. Experienced judges awarded various awards to members for their work. That year, members also took field trips to gardens, waterfalls, and the like. Starting years back and continuing to date, on members’ birthdays the Club donates to state gardens such as the Daniel Boone Native Garden and the Elizabethan Garden.

The Mountain Garden Club doesn’t rest during the holidays, either. At every Highlands Christmas Parade, the members entertain as dancing gardeners. At the first parade, in 1999, the Club’s dancing theme was “Let Us Hoe.” The dance has won hearts and recognition each year, including winning the name of the “dancing babies” in 2007. In previous years, the Club worked at the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, making wreaths for long-term care patients’ doors and decorating large Christmas trees. Today, the Club continues to have their annual Christmas party, which always includes a project to benefit others. In 2007, members brought gifts to give to children through the International Friendship Center and the Highlands Emergency Council. Around 1990, members also participated in the downtown Halloween Celebration, handing out goodies and flowers to children.

The Mountain Garden Club has won many awards over the years. The first of these was in 1992, for the Main Street planters project by the Hummers. The Hummers received even more awards from 1993 through 2000. Other awards of the Club include: 2 Petal Grants, one in 1995 and one in 1997; Best Public School Beautification (won twice and once won an award); Club of the Year for clubs 19-40 (won three times); Bird Award; Butterfly Garden; Best Five Year History (for 1999-2003); Conservation Award (Land Stewards); Landscape Design Award (Butterfly Garden); Member of the Year; and many others.

Today, the Club continues to donatet time, plants, flowers, and funds to various projects. Some of these include the Cherokee Garden at the Highlands Nature Center, the grounds at the Highlands Historic House, the Highlands Middle School Picnic area, and the Butterfly Garden at the Highlands High school (started in 1995 and also supported by other grants).

Since before 1994, creating and funding scholarships has been a major part of the Mountain Garden Club’s community service. A special project for the summer programs at the Nature Center were also provided by the Club.

The Visitor Information Program airs at 7 am, 9 am, 4 pm, 6 pm, 9 pm, and 11 pm.
... PARK POLICY continued from page 1

before we turn people away," he said.  Basically the board agreed it would be OK if it was fundraising for a nonprofit organization or a non-commercial venture, but defining non-commercial was sticky.  Commissioner Hank Ross reminded the board that Town Attorney Bill Coward said the board could discriminate in the case of park usage.  Dennis DeWolf clinched the discussion when he suggested the distinction should be if a volunteer pulled a show together rather than a commercial promoter.

Planning Board member Pat Taylor suggested it be a citizen in the community versus someone from Atlanta.

But John Shearl reminded the town that the county sent $500,000 up to Highlands for parks and recreation each year so people from Macon County should be considered in the scenario, too.

So in the end, non-commercial events organized by residents of Macon County will be considered on a case-by-case basis.  As suggested by Commissioner Buz Dotson, town properties can’t be reserved more than 180 days out but must be reserved 30 days prior to the event.

Furthemore fees to use Rec Park space or Pine Street Park will be levied at the discretion of the Rec Park Director who will follow an adopted fee schedule.  The policy was adopted pending suggested changes and approval by the town attorney.

... MULLEN from page 9

Wayne Coleman, who had one of the lead parts, told me this is one of the best teams he has ever worked with.  This is an important year for the visual arts in our community.  We have a new name for the art center, “The Bascom” and this year we can look for completion of their outstanding facility on Oak Street along with the many activities that will bring to our area.  I certainly hope everyone will take advantage of the many events and classes which The Bascom will bring to Western North Carolina.  We are all honored to have them amongst us.

... ORDINANCES continued from page 1

the Outdoor Display of Merchandise ordinance until you look at it again," he said.  "Instead of having a sterile Main Street, merchandise displayed on private property makes the town look good.”

He said the original reason restrictions were placed on outdoor merchandising was to keep the public right-of-way clear but current displays are on private property.

Planning Board member Mike Bryson agreed.

“We spent a lot of time, conversation and some bickering considering what we thought was a good change to the ordinance.  It was sent to you and basically ignored,” he said.

Jerry Moore of Kilwin’s on Main Street said he canvassed businesses on Main Street and everyone agreed they want Main Street to look good, but the amended ordinance is very restrictive, even on private property.

“We need to have a community with character and we agree it has to be reasonable.  But people come here and like it because Highlands has character,” he said.

He said most of all displaying merchandise outdoors helps businesses.

“We have a short season and rents are very high on Main Street.  When people walk by our business, we want to grab their attention and pull them inside.  We need all the help we can get,” he said.  “We are competing for every person who walks by our shops.”

Stephanie Nieuwendyk owner of Dutchman’s Design admitted that she probably has the biggest outdoor display on Main Street and said she has expanded outside but doesn’t believe her actions or those of any other merchant hurts anything “as long as it’s done well,” she said.

Janet Avery, the new owner of The Little Flower Shop said she just bought $20,000 worth of merchandise she intended to display in the courtyard outside her shop.  “Over the years that courtyard has added so much charm to that corner.  If you take it away, I might as well shut down,” she said.

Mal Phillips of Twigs said merchants go into each season with a lot of question marks and they work hard to make their shops look inviting.  “We want people to come in when they drive by,” he said.  “You need to ensure that you have a successful business community. Please reconsider this issue.”

The board didn’t rescind the ordinance but agreed to discuss it on March 24.

Restaurant Parking

The Town Board, Planning Board and now the new Land Use Committee made up of Buz Dotson and Hank Ross have been considering amending the restaurant parking ordinance for months.  Talk began long before the season was set to start, but now, with Easter one week away, the issue is still up in the air.

Though Town Planner Joe Cooley’s shared parking scenarios involving public parking spaces, off-hour private parking lots and dual-use parking weren’t discarded, a meeting of the Land Use Committee potentially changed the direction altogether.

Instead of amending the parking ordinance in general, Ross and Dotson suggested amending it just for restaurants outside the B1 area — at least until a full-blown parking study could be completed.

Ross said potential unintended consequences of adopting what the Planning Board recommended could lead to problems.

“The purpose is to limit more impervious surfaces but there’s a chance that restaurants would expand if they didn’t have to use their property for parking so essentially they would be increasing impervious areas,” he said.

Cooley called it building creep.

The Land Use Committee suggested allowing use of public parking spaces to satisfy restaurant parking requirements — where one space equals three seats — only if the public parking is contiguous to the restaurant’s property or property a restaurant leases if it too, is contiguous.

Following this scenario, Fireside Restaurant could use six public parking spaces, Wild Thyme could use five spaces but no other restaurant could use any public spaces.

Planning Board member Linda Clark said this scenario didn’t help anyone. “Fireside Restaurant gets six spaces and Wild Thyme gets five which doesn’t allow them to stay in business.  You gave us a problem to address and now you’re saying you’re not going to do anything about it.”

She said the Planning Board understood that they were to address the changes in town – that there is an abundance of public parking and restaurants going out of business.

Mike Bryson said there were more restaurants in Highlands 15 years ago then there are now. “Basically what you’re saying is the only people who can use public parking are the Main Street businesses.”

Commissioner Amy Patterson said others can use it but restaurants in other zones just can’t count it toward their requirements.

Clark said because Main Street businesses don’t have to worry about parking requirements, they can expand their business footprint, which could also increase impervious areas.  She cited Wolfgang’s Restaurant that expanded a few years ago.

But Patterson said it’s not likely any other restaurant on Main Street would be able to do that.

In the end, Commissioner Ross said that the comments made at Wednesday’s meeting had a lot of bearing about how the board should go.  “I’m not trying to railroad anything I’m just trying to discuss this.”

Mayor Don Mullen said the subject would be discussed and an ordinance would be finalized at the special March 24 meeting so a public hearing could be set and an amended ordinance adopted by mid-April.

Panthertown gets needed clean-up

During the first Friends of Panthertown work day on Feb. 16, volunteers Aaron Roy, Susannah Brown, Catherine Osborne, Lucy Lowe, Walker Taylor, Robin Taylor, Ben Harris, Mike Purdy, Margo Purdy, Barry Carter, and Shirley Carter worked hard learning basic trail maintenance skills, while also sharing information about the history, geology, ecology and botany of Panthertown Valley.  The group, led by Mike Purdy, dug out large quantities of silt and debris from 64 water bars, and installed four new water bars on the Blackrock Trail.  The other group, led by Barry Carter, removed low-hanging limbs, lopped thorny green-briars, and cleared brush and logs from the trails leading to Granny Burrell’s old home place, Frolicktown Falls, and Wildemess Falls.  Undergrowth was also removed from a patch of pink lady slippers found growing along the old road bed leading to Granny Burrell’s home place.  For more information about the Friends of Pahnterton, call Nina Elliott at 526-9938 (ext 258) or email to panthertown@jmca.org.  The Panthertown project scoping will be presented at the March 18 meeting.  Officials from the Nantahala Ranger District will present the scoping proposal and provide instructions on how to respond to the proposal.  A 30-day comment period will follow the March 18 release of the scoping proposal.  For more information contact Nina Elliott, the Friends of Panthertown Coordinator with the Jackson-Macon Conservation Alliance, at 828-526-9938 (ext 258) or by email at panthertown@jmca.org.
On March 7 the Macon County Sheriff’s office conducted phase two of its “Operation Safe Streets” campaign. Deputies and officers from the N.C. Probation and Parole Office arrested 21 individuals on various charges. The offenses ranged from minor traffic and drug offenses to serious child sex offense crimes.

During “Operation Safe Streets,” an officer from Immigration Custom Enforcement (I.C.E.) also assisted the Sheriff’s office. Eight individuals were detained by Immigration Officers and held in the Macon County Detention Facility for immigration violations. On March 10, those individuals were transported by Macon County deputies to Charlotte where they began the process of deportation.

“As citizens, we understand that there are consequences when we violate the laws of our state and that is true whether you are a citizen of the United States or not,” said Sheriff Robert Holland.

- Jose Cortes Matias, of Franklin, was charged as an Immigration Detainer and held without a bond.
- Crisoforo Rios, of Franklin, was charged as an Immigration Detainer and held without a bond.
- Dionisio Ordaz-Vazquez, of Franklin, was charged as Immigration Detainer and held without bond.
- Luis Ruesas Yepez, of Franklin, was charged as an Immigration Detainer and held without bond.
- Emilano Ramos Diaz, was charged as an Immigration Detainer and held without bond.
- Charly Matias, of Franklin, was charged as an Immigration Detainer and held without bond.
- Alfonso Matias, of Franklin, was charged as an Immigration Detainer and held without bond.
- Celso Ramos Diaz, of Franklin, was charged as an Immigration Detainer and held without bond.
- William Travis Branton, of Franklin, was charged with Driving While Impaired and held on a $500 bond.
- Phillip Anthony Matias, of Franklin, was charged with Contributing to Delinquency of Minor, Possession of Drug Paraphernalia and Possession of Marijuana and held on a $1,000 bond.
- Billy Joe Mathis, of Tuckasegee, was charged with Violation of Domestic Violence Order and held without a bond.
- Larry Hurst, of Franklin, was charged with Unauthorized Use of Motor Vehicle and held on a $1,000 bond.
- Adriane Nock, of Franklin, was charged with Failure to Appear / Order for Arrest and held on a $1,500 bond.

- See SAFE STREETS page 20

Placing crew takes a break after restoring part of Satulah Mountain. From left to right Fernando Sylva, Jose Vargas, Brian Cabe, and Sam Chambers.

Your Land Trust at work

Continued from page 15

SPRITUALLY SPEAKING

bowled in the “mixed owls” league on Friday nights and he would get so aggravated at grandma (a polio victim with one leg and foot shorter than the other) because she always brought down the score for the team.

When the time came for my own mother’s funeral, I mustered up the courage to speak. Even though I am an ordained minister (and, therefore, should have known better), I said very little about my mother’s faith and the promise of the resurrection. I told the stories everyone knew about how my mother never earned a driver’s license because the first time she got behind the wheel, she found a way to ram dad’s car into the one lonely oak tree in the cow pasture; about how we went camping at Seven Mountains every summer; about spending the week at Grange Fair; and how she took me in and adopted me as her own son.

The other ‘preacher’ turned the rest of the service into an evangelistic altar call and tried to convince everyone that my mother’s dying wish was to bring one more soul into the kingdom (which wasn’t true...her dying wish was that she would be able to see again after being legally blind for the past 10 years). I try to keep this all in mind when I officiate a funeral. I know most grieving survivors want the service to be brief and without fanfare, but there also has to be some awareness of the (hopefully) good and wonderful life this person lived. I am aware that we pastors have an obligation to preach the promise of the resurrection, but the promise only comes alive when you flesh it out in the life of the one now departed.

So, if you are in the unfortunate position of having to plan a funeral, mention to the officiating minister that you don’t want the generic John or Jane Doe one-size-fits-all service. But what if you would like the real life of the deceased to be shared and celebrated. What makes the gospel message so compelling is not that it’s generic, but that it’s personal. He died and rose again for you.
SAFE STREETS continued from page 19

- Nicholas Edward Tucciaselli, of Franklin, was charged with First Degree Rape of a Child and Possession of Firearm by Convicted Felon and held on a $100,000 bond.
- Brett Charles Aldrich, of Franklin, was charged with Larceny of Motor Fuel and held on a $500 bond.
- Jeffery Todd Queen, of Franklin, was charged with Violation of Domestic Violence Order and held without bond.
- Loraine Louise Pevia, of Franklin, was charged with Simple Affray and held on a $500 bond.

- Manuel Gutierrez Flores, of Franklin, was charged with Failure to Appear/Order for Arrest and held on a $500 bond.
- Blake Thornhill, of Franklin, was charged with Simple Poss. of Schedule 2, Poss. of Marijuana and Poss. of Drug Paraphernalia and held on a $2,500 bond.
- Juan Morales Canseco, of Franklin, was charged with No Operators License and held on a $170 bond.
- Bobbie Dean Webb, of Franklin, was charged with Assault on Female and held without bond.

RISKY BEHAVIOR continued from page 17

Juan Morales Canseco, of Franklin, was charged with No Operators License and held on a $2,500 bond.

Franklin's 3% room tax and TTA is separate from the TTA the county commission recently voted to form.

In the county’s scenario, the 3% room tax money collected in Franklin, Highlands and Nantahala will be sent to its TTA and be disbursed back to each area.

With justifiable “legal” cause, recipients in those areas can be the chambers of commerce, the visitor centers, or any other organization that needs money to promote an event that will draw tourists to the county.

At the final January occupancy tax taskforce meeting, both chamber directors – Linda Harbuck in Franklin and Bob Kietyka in Highlands — admitted that a portion of their salaries as well as the salaries of their assistants and the entire salary of the visitor center directors is subsidized by room tax money. Kietyka said about 60% of his time is devoted to visitor center duties thus justifying the chamber’s use of room tax money. It’s legal to use room tax money to fund visitor center salaries and events.

Clearly, Macon County’s chambers of commerce can’t live off the membership dues they require as private organizations and fortunately for them some politicians are willing to fight for them. But it would be good for politicians to remember that their jobs are to represent the taxpayers who elected them and not the special interest groups and private organizations that lobby them at social and civic clubs.

Though the accommodation businesses in Highlands, Franklin and Nantahala collect the room tax, it belongs to the citizens of North Carolina -- those in the county and those in its towns -- and should be used by citizens and their organizations who, through self-perpetuating events and activities, consistently bring visitors to the area.

If Highlands followed Franklin’s lead by imposing its own 3% room tax and setting up its own TTA, organizations like the Highlands Playhouse, the Highlands Community Players, the Instant Theatre Company, the Arts and Crafts Fair, and the Bascom could request funds -- upwards of $280,000 a year -- to promote the events, shows and activities they produce year-round which clearly bring tourists to the area.

Furthermore, the town could use the money to outfit and run the visitor-information kiosk and ticket center currently proposed in the new Town Hall complex. If a portion of the county’s current 3% room tax continues to be used for chambers of commerce salaries, then the additional 3% room tax the town of Highlands could levy would be more important than ever.

With a 3% room tax of its own, the town of Highlands could directly support the organizations that produce the cultural events that enhance the flavor of our town and draw people to Highlands, thereby perpetuating businesses and jobs.

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(a great leap of faith) over the next 20 years the county could spend $20 x $800,000 or $16 million to keep the small schools.

Yes, the county would have to spend additional money on renovation. But how much? We have no idea because the commission won’t tell us. Or we can spend $40 million on bricks and mortar and $18 million in interest at 4% for 20 years (more if the county borrows at 4½%) for a total of $58 million, and we can have nice new mega schools!

Then we were told to trust our elected officials. So I guess we should just accept whatever they tell us. But then I remembered three little words of Ronald Reagan – “trust but verify.” So Mr. Davis, why not declassify these Top Secret documents? Why not publish them in the press? Why not show the prohibitive cost to renovate with each code that you have to meet, and then show the $40 million to build new schools along with the interest attached to the $40 million? That way we mere mortals can see exactly how much we can save.

In fact, wasn’t greater transparency one of the objectives you all decided was necessary at the one of your recent work sessions? This would be a good way to start that process.

Bob Lavery
Franklin

www.cimbuild.com
Dance to the sounds of Lisa Price at ITC's St. Paddy's Day Dance, Saturday at 8 p.m.

What is this St. Patrick's day all about? St. Patrick was born in Wales about 385 AD into a pagan society. His name was Maewyn. At age 16 he was taken as a slave by Irish marauders and served six years until he escaped to Gaul. While in Gaul he became a student under St. Germain and studied Christianity for 12 years and took the Christian name Patrick.

During those years he realized his calling to convert Irish pagans to his new found religion. Patrick was appointed bishop to Ireland and proceeded to be very successful in winning converts.

He set up monasteries, schools and churches across Ireland for 30 years. He died March 17, 461 in County Down. Some of the Irish folklore includes St. Patrick giving a sermon from a hilltop that drove all the snakes from Ireland. Truth be told no snakes were ever native to Ireland, making some people think the myth is a metaphor for his successful conversions of the pagans.

One traditional icon of the day is the three leaf shamrock, which Patrick used to explain the Trinity.

St. Patrick's Day has been a festival since his death in Ireland. America adopted the custom in 1737. The first parade was held in Boston, MA on March 17, 1762. Today there is so much green worn on St. Patrick's day that it is said to be the first greening of spring.

On Saturday March 15 at 8 p.m. in "the little dance hall in Western NC" the Instant Theatre Company's Studio on Main, The Lisa Price Band kicks off the "brining of the green" holiday celebration. Time to dress in your best green finery (to avoid being pinched), dust off the dancin shoes and prepare to party.

Tickets are $10 for adults, $5 for children 17 and under. Music starts at 8 p.m. in The Studio on Main, 310 Oak Square, Main Street in Highlands. Please call 828-342-9197 for information.
Bingo winner makes donation to the Cub Scouts

At the March 6 Bingo game, sponsored each month by the Rotary Club of Highlands, David La Cignina was the winner of the final game. He won $250 and generously donated a portion of his winnings to Highlands Boy Scout Troup 207. Pictured is David with Boy Scout official Buck Trott and Cub Scout Ben Avery. All net proceeds from the Bingo games are used by the Rotary Club of Highlands to support local projects.

Bring a drink, lunch, and wear sturdy comfortable shoes. Hikes are limited to 20. Call leaders Mike and Susan Kettle, 743-1079, for reservations or more information. Visitors are welcome but no pets please.

• Smoky Mountain Beekeepers’ one-day beginner bee school 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Swain County Extension Center/Southwestern Community Center (old Almond school) just west of Bryson City, in Swain County. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. There is a $10 charge, payable at the door. Lunch and resource materials will be provided free of charge.

• The Highlands Memorial Post 370 of the American Legion will meet at the Highlands Civic Center on Saturday at 9 a.m. Following breakfast there will be a meeting. All members and eligible veterans are invited to come and enjoy breakfast and support the organization that supports you. For more information, call Ed Jones at 743-0886.

• Sunday, March 16
  • The First Baptist Church Choir will present the Easter musical “In Christ Alone” at 10:45 a.m.
  • The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 1.5-mile hike around the historic Tessentee Farm, preserved by the Little Tennessee Land Trust. Meet at the Smoky Mtn. Visitors’ Center on Hwy. 441 near Otto. Drive 6 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 Coneill, 369-6820, for reservations or more information. Visitors are welcome, but no pets please.

• Monday, March 17
  • “Risky Behaviors and What Every Parent Should Know” 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Franklin High School Fine Arts Center, Franklin. The program will consist of research, personal experiences, and recommendations directly from an area family that lost a child in similar circumstances and the community agencies that were involved in dealing with the tragedy. The program is co-sponsored by Macon County Schools and the Macon County Sheriff’s Dept.

• Tuesday, March 18
  • Hunting Heritage Super Fund Auction and Dinner will help benefit the National Wild Turkey Conservation at 6 p.m. at the Dillard House Conference Center in Dillard, GA. Tickets are $55 and help support wildlife management on public, private and corporate lands and preserve hunting as sport.
  • The Friends of Panthertown will host an informational meeting open to the public on Tuesday, at 6:30 p.m. at the Cashiers Library. Officials from the Forest Service will present the scoping proposal and answer questions. A 30-day comment period will follow the March 18 release. For more information contact Nina Elliott, the Friends of Panthertown Coordinator with the Jackson-Macon Conservation Alliance, at 828-526-9938 (extension 258) or by email at panthertown@jmca.org.

• Friday, March 21
  • Beginning at the Catholic church, participants will stop at various places to read an account of the walk Jesus made carrying his cross to Calvary. Familiar hymns will be sung along the way. It takes about 30 minutes and will finish at the Baptist church. If it is raining, bring an umbrella.
  • American Red Cross Blood Drive at Angel Medical Center Blood Drive (120 Riverview Street; Franklin, NC) 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please call 369-4166 for more information or to schedule an appointment. All presenting donors at the Angel Medical Center blood drive will receive a free t-shirt and can enter a drawing for a cruise for two! Eligible blood donors must be at least 17 years of age, weigh a minimum of 110 pounds and be in general good health. Donors must have a form of positive identification in order to donate.

• Saturday, March 22
  • Easter Egg Hunt at the Highlands Civic Center (Rec Park) at 11 a.m. The event is for ages 0-3 years, 4-6 years, and 7-10 years.
  • The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate-to-strenuous 5-6 mile hike in Panthertown Valley to four waterfalls and Little Green Mtn. with an elevation change of 300 feet, one stream crossing, and possibly some icy patches. Meet at the Cashiers Wachovia Bank (in back) at 9 a.m. Drive 16 miles round trip. Bring a drink, lunch, and wear sturdy comfortable shoes. Hikes are limited to 20. Call leader, Walker Taylor, 743-6977, for reservations. Visitors are welcome but no pets please.

• Sunday, March 23
  • An ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service at the amphitheatre behind the Nature Center at 6:30 a.m.

• Tuesday, March 25
  • Free lectures at Cashiers Chiropractic and Wellness Center. “Why do we take the vitamins we do?” To register, call either the Highlands office at 526-3709 or the Cashiers office at 743-9070.

• Thurs.-Fri., March 27-29
  • Parallel Lives II/Graceland at ITC. This talented group of ladies (plus others) will be presenting two nights of fun and entertainment with Graceland / Parallel Lives II, directed by Mary Adair Leslie. A joint effort of the Highlands Community Players and The Instant Theatre Company, many familiar faces will grace the stage from last year’s sell-out performances of Parallel Lives as well as some new talent. The women will play all roles, both male and female, and include Mary Byrum, Katie Cochran, Bonnie Earman, Carla Gates, Jenny King, Mary Adair Leslie, Dianne Rosazza, Ronnie Spilton, Breta Stroud, and Sandie Trevathan. Graceland, by Elyen Byron, is the story of two of ‘The King’s’ biggest fans on the day that Graceland opens to the public. A poignant and funny one-act play, Graceland stars Mary Byrum and Carla Gates. Contains adult language and situations. Reservations are strongly suggested. Call the ITC Box Office at 828-342-9197.

• Thursday, March 27
  • Democratic women want to serve you a fine supper! Everyone is invited to the “Loaded” potato supper from 4:30-7 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church in Franklin, NC. Tickets are $5 per plate for adults ($10) and children under 12 ($5). Take out is available. So Highlanders if you are in Franklin and want to support the Women’s Democratic movement, please stop by. For more information call 526-3363 or 349-1772.

• Sat.-Sun., March 29-30
  • Auditions will be held at Highlands Playhouse Saturday and Sunday from 2-5 p.m. each day. The plays are “On Golden Pond” and “Inherit the Wind.” Auditions are available for adults ($15) and children under 12 ($5). Out of town auditions will be held on Saturday at 2 p.m. actors must be in general good health. Donors must have a form of positive identification in order to donate.

• Saturday, March 29
  • An ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service at the amphitheatre behind the Nature Center at 6:30 a.m.

Good Friday Service to feature Brahms’ Requiem

Molly McKim

The Episcopal Church of the Incarnation choir and soloists under the direction of Fletcher Wolfe will sing the beautiful music of Brahms’ Requiem on Friday evening March 27 at 7 p.m. in the church’s sanctuaries.

This magnificent choral work seldom heard outside of great concert halls will be presented for the first time in Highlands and has as its soprano soloist, Highlands’ Molly McKim. Ms. McKim, one of 13 McKim children all who sing is a voice student of Mr. Wolfe, and along with many local appearances was heard last season as featured soloist at the famous St. Mark’s Basilica in Venice, Italy. Robert Henry, artist-in-residence at the church will serve as accompanist.

This concert welcomes again the renowned African-American tenor Darrel McShee. He will sing accompanied the very moving Negro spiritual “Crucifixion.”

This solemn Good Friday service commemorating the suffering and death of Jesus Christ is under the direction of the church’s rector Reverend Brian Sullivan. Everyone is invited to attend.
On Saturday, February 2, numerous CENTURY 21 Mountain Lifestyles agents received awards for their 2007 real estate production at a banquet given in their honor at the Asheville Renaissance Hotel.

Individuals awarded the Silver Producers Award were: Sherman Pope, Highlands office; Gary Garren, Highlands office; Elizabeth Matej, Cashiers office.

Individuals awarded the Bronze Producers Award were: Bob Shipp, Highlands office; Bill Bubenick, Highlands office; Cathy Garren, Cashiers office.

The following agents were recognized as "Rising Stars." In order to qualify for this distinction, agents must be relatively new in their real estate career and have demonstrated exemplary character.

The following agents received honors as the Top Listing Agent in their office:
- Cashiers: Elizabeth Matej, Top Listing by Units
- Highlands: Gary Garren, Top Listing by Volume

The following agents were recognized as Top Sales leaders in their respective offices:
- Cashiers: Elizabeth Matej, Top Sales by Volume & Units
- Highlands: Sherman Pope, Top Sales by Units & Production
- Highlands: Gary Garren, Top Sales by Volume
HELP WANTED

WORK WITH THE BEST. Local Fine Dining Restaurant needs full-time prep/cook and bar service staff. Excellent work environment. Competitive wages and benefits. To apply, call 828-526-2338.

THE INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP CENTER OF HIGHLANDS, NC is seeking part-time administrative assistant starting May 1, 2008. Applicant must have both written and oral Spanish knowledge, be motivated and work well with others. Basic computer skills are necessary. Additional training will be given once applicant begins. For more information please call Jill at 828-526-9938 x 290.

SERVERS AND COUNTER HELP NEEDED at SweeTreats, Highlands. Call 526-9822.

MAINTENANCE ENGINEER POSITION AVAILABLE at Hampton Inn/Highlands Inn. 526 Round/Full time. Must have basic knowledge of electronics, plumbing, minor electrical and construction. Send Resume to P.O. Box 1060 Highlands, NC 28741 or email to info@hamptoninn-nc.com. Call Sabrina for interview 828-526-7659.

CNA or CNA II for ER and Acute Care at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Full time positions for 12 hour shifts. Unit clerk skills preferred. Must be able to provide quality patient care, be professional, and be self motivated. 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 Human Resources at 828-526-1301 or apply online at www.hchospital.org.

RESPIRATORY THERAPIST at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Full-time position with 8 and 12 hour shifts. Responsibilities include taking call and being able to respond within 20 minutes. Also must be able to intubate a patient. Current registration or certification in North Carolina, along with current BCLS and/or ACLS required. Experience with rehabilitation and disease prevention preferred. Full benefits, or the option to opt out of benefits for an increase in pay, available after 30 days of full-time employment. Pre-employment screening required. Call Human Resources at 828-526-1301 or apply online at www.hchospital.org.

EMERGENCY ROOM RN’s needed at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. One Full-time and two Part-time positions available. 12 hour night shifts. Shift and weekend differentials. BCLS and ACLS required. 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 Human Resources at 828-526-1301 or apply online at www.hchospital.org.

DIRECTOR OF NURSING is needed in the beautiful mountains of Western North Carolina. Experienced nurse leader for a 24 bed Critical Access Hospital, responsible for managing a budget, quality of patient care, customer satisfaction, and the oversight of management for the Acute Care Unit (Med/Surg), ER, OR, PACU and GI Lab, Hospice, and Cardio-Pulmonary. Must be able to provide leadership for managers and staff, and conduct recruitment and retention activities. Masters degree with a background in nursing leadership required. This position reports directly to the CEO/President of Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, working closely with the QA Nurse Manager and the VP of Operations. Full benefits, or the option to opt out of benefits for an increase in pay, available after 30 days of full-time employment. Pre-employment screening required. Call Human Resources at 828-526-1301 or apply online at www.hchospital.org.

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

CLASSIFIEDS

IN MIRROR LAKE AREA, less than 1 mile to town, front porch, back deck. Rents monthly for $1200+utilities, call 770-977-5692.

SAPPHIRE MOUNTAIN CLUB - Furnished River Run II Condominium, access to all amenities, $600 plus utilities. First month and $400 Security deposit required. Contact Kim 342-8490 - 3/20

ONE BR/OONE BATH FURNISHED APARTMENT close to town including all utilities except phone. $750. Contact Tucker or Jeaninne Chambers, The Chambers Agency, REALTORS. 828-526-3717.

1BED/1BATH 900sfq. $825/month includes utilities.$300 deposit. Unfurnished. Non-smoker preferred. Walking distance to town. (828)526-9494

3 BEDROOM 2 BATH APARTMENT on Main Street. 526 Round/Full time. Walking distance to town. $1600. Call (828) 243-2939 or contact 828-243-2939.

EMERGENCY ROOM RN'S needed at Highlands Cashiers Hospital. Performs clerical duties and acts as receptionist for the nursing unit. Experience in a hospital setting preferred. Full benefits, or the option to opt out of benefits for an increase in pay, available after 30 days of full-time employment. Pre-employment screening required. Call Human Resources at 828-526-1301 or apply online at www.hchospital.org.

WORK WANTED

HOME DUTY SITTER available for elderly, caring, experienced with references. Please call for hours available and specifics. Denise - 369-3813

EXPERIENCED FINISH CARPENTER: Call Alfredo at 828-349-1590. You can also call the International Friendship Center to see how we can help! 828-526-9938 x 290.

CLEANING OR RESTAURANT WORK WANTED: Contact Giora at 828-371-5806. You can also call the International Friendship Center to see how we can help! 828-526-9938 x 290.

LOOKING FOR A HOUSEKEEPER? Call Dora at 828-200-1038. Call Janet at 828-399-9693 or 828-526-9709. Luz Maria at 349-2735. Cira at 349-1838. Erica at 864-886-9986. You can also call the International Friendship Center to see how we can help! 828-526-9938 x 290.

EXPERIENCED TRUCK DRIVER SEeks FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT: Call Mike at 828-524-4052. You can also call the International Friendship Center to see how we can help! 828-526-9938 x 290.

RETAIL SPACE FOR RENT

RETAIL SPACE FOR LEASE. Hearthstone Center on busy Hwy 64 beside the old Hardee’s, 2,052 sq ft, High visibility, Plenty of parking. Great retail location ready to be occupied, central heat & air, carpet, excellent condition, Busy shopping center. Call 828-243-2939 or 828-743-9545 for more information.


RESIDENTIAL SPACE FOR RENT

HOUSE FOR RENT (for residence or office): 2 br, 2 ba, Heat/AC, Washer/Dryer hookup, Hwy 64, Franklin, near Walnut Creek. $750/mo. Call Sandy at 369-6263 or 524-7350.

GREAT 3 BDR/2 BATH COTTAGE

IN MIRROR LAKE CENTER. For rent. This 2nd floor apartment has a great View and is convenient to town. $475 plus utilities. Call 828-524-5733.

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP CENTER TO see how we can help! 828-526-9938 x 290.

Call the International Friendship Center to see how we can help! 828-526-9938 x 290.

FURNITURE TO RENT – 1BR, 1BA Furnished or unfurnished. 6 month lease - $750. monthly plus utilities. Call 526-1684.

VACATION RENTAL

HIGHLANDS COUNTRY CLUB – Sorry, golf and club privileges not available. $2,495 a week. Call 912-230-7202.

THE LODGE ON MIRROR LAKE – Fish or canoe from deck. Available weekly, monthly, 3-day min. Call 828-342-2302.

ON LAKE SEQUOYAH – Three master suites with jetted tubs and showers, sleeping nook with private bath, 4 fireplaces, 2 living areas, newly renovated. Private dock with canoe and firepit. Call 828-342-2302.

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE


SCALY MOUNTAIN Building lots, views, creeks, wooded. 2-5 acres, start at $150,000 by owner, owner financing available. (404) 831-0222 or 770-977-5692.
ITEMS FOR SALE

OFFICE DESK – 30x60, 6 drawers, Oak finish, $150. Pottery Barn corner desk, White, with file drawers. New $750, sell for $300. Call Sandy at 369-6263 or 524-7350.


KING SIZE BEDROOM SET – Complete set includes two nightstands, two chest of drawers, large dresser with mirror. Like new. $500. Call 706-982-2251.

PAIR OF DESIGNER WING BACK CHAIRS – Fabric with velvet trim. Neutral colors in Brown, cream/gold muted $375. Coordinating area carpet roughly 8 x 10 (can be cut to size) 526-4340 8-5

BARELY USED 30GB ZUNE VIDEO MP3 PLAYER – Comes with leather case. $150 or best offer. Call Davis at 828-526-9153 for more information.

BALDWIN ACROSONIC PIANO – Excellent condition. $300. Call 743-5151.

TWO-SIT-ON-TOP KAYAKS – Orange. Paddles included. $500 for both. Call Lisa at 770-842-3784.

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

2 BATHROOM LAVATORIES – With brass faucets; 1 wall closet - all almond finish $25.00 each; 1 steno chair - black with mustard color back and seat 15. 526-2671

MISC. ITEMS – Play Station 2 $75; Old Walt Disney movies (never opened); Indoor plants; Girls’ basketball; Collectible Basketball Cards (never opened). Call 526-9123.

SNOW TIRES – For Ford Expedition 03-05 factory rims. Complete set of 4 only $400. Size 17 x 7 ½. Call Wolfgang at 526-8396.

POOL TABLE – Peter Vitalie 8′ x 50′ pool table, burl wood rails, upgraded leather pockets, new upgraded felt – oak in color – $3,400. Table located in Cashiers, Call 770-313-0899.

BARBOUR COAT – Burghley Duster. $350. Call 526-9027.

MASSEY FERGUSON DIESEL DELUXE 35 WITH POWER STEERING – Completely rebuilt, repainted, new tires. Includes scrape blade, and an 8,000 lbs. tandem axle trailer. Sharp Package! $7,500. Call (828)526-1684 and leave message.

SEII – BUNK BED SET – Very Nice Desk; One 11X15 rug, Lt. in color, very good condition; Mountain Bike w/carrier, helmet. Call 526-5046.

ANTIQUE ORNATE WALNUT Victorian gold velvet sofa and blue chair. Call 369-0498 and leave message.

BEAMS, FLOORING AND ENTIRE STRUCTURES: HAND HEWN BEAMS – Beautiful material, large faces, 3″-5″. $4.50 per board foot. Wormy white oak flooring, resawn, milled and finished brass finish, fits fireplace opening to said estate will please make immediate settlement. 215-529-7637.Delivery available.


KING-SIZE HEADBOARD, $40; new glass fireplace screen, (still in box,) polished brass finish, fits fireplace opening Height 24 3/4’ “- 29 3/4″. Width 30” to 37 l/ 2,” $125. Call 828-371-2999

MEDICAL LIFT CHAIR – Used one week. Paid $65, asking $500. 526-5558.

ANTIQUE CHERRY DINING TABLE from Estate Sale. Double drop-leaf. Rope carved legs. Seats 4-10 people Extends to 4x10 ft $1,500obo 828-737-1517

DOG KENNEL, 10′ x 10′ x 6′, heavy gauge chainlink. Like New. $175, was $270. Call 828.389.2722 Hayesville, NC DELUXE VENTED GAS heater hig h btu, slightly used, $100. 524-6038.


ANTIQUE BEAMS, FLOORING AND STRUCTURES: Hand hewn beams in oak and yellow pine. Beautiful material, large faces, $3.50-$4 per board foot. Original, reclaimed white and yellow pine flooring, random wide widths (6-16′) $6/board ft. Also selling entire log and timber frame structures. 215-529-7637

BEAUTIFUL FLOORING: Wormy white oak flooring, resawn, milled and ready to lay w/16′, 6-12′ widths, $8/sq. ft. 215-529-7637

LOG CABIN KIT – 32 x 24.8 1/2 inch yellow Pine logs. Walls only. $9,995. Call 526-0241.

HILTI TE 805 DEMOLITION HAMMER – New. Case & 4 bits. $500. 528-526-2700 or 828-421-7886


GOLD LEAF DINETTE CABINET – 19′x64′x84′.3 glass windows on top. 3 drawers on bottom. 2 bottom doors with keys. Imported from Belgium. Excellent condition. $1,500. 369-3250.

VEHICLES FOR SALE


2002 TOYOTA LANDCRUISER, Bk/ tan leather, NAV, wood-grain, 6 CD, 80,400 miles w/ ext. warranty. 116k miles. $25,000. 770-965-6551


2002 TOYOTA TACOMA TRUCK – Good Condition. 67,000 miles, new battery, wipers, tires. $7,000. 828-526-2416.

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

SERVICES

FIREWOOD “Nature Dried” Call 526-2251.

CUTTING EDGE TREE SERVICE – “Let us go out on a Limb for You.” We specialize in tree removal, trimming, LOT/View clearing, under brushing and stump grinding. Quality work and Fully Insured. For Free Estimate call 524-1309 or 421-2905.

TREE SERVICE – From view clearing to the most complicated tree removal, under brushing, stump removal/grinding/brush chipping/hauling and storm cleanup. For good quality, dependable service, fully insured, give us a call at 828-526-2251.


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 526-8078.

BUSINESSES FOR SALE

HIGHLANDS RADIO SHACK! Own a successful year-round business on Main Street. Asking $399,000. Call Thea or Chuck at 526-3350.

LOST


LEGAL

ADMINISTRATOR’S NOTICE

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of William Jesse Munger, deceased, late of Macon County, N.C, this is to notify all persons having claims against the estate of said deceased to exhibit their interest in the undersigned on or before the 5th day of Jne, 2008, or this notice will be filed in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate settlement.

This the 6th day of March, 2007.

William Fred Munger
P.O. Box 314
Highlands, N.C., 28741
3/6, 3/13, 3/20, 3/27
... LETTERS continued from page 2

the left argue their opinions and the bulk of the people, and congress for that matter, listen and discuss. No matter how eloquent the argument, there is always compromise and the country moves forward with new laws, sometimes left of the middle and sometime right of the middle but never to the extreme. Small moves, and the nation moves forward.

One on the negative of American politics is that every candidate’s life is ripped to shreds — nothing is left. If he (or she) has any “cloud” in the past you can be sure someone will expose it. The truly sad thing is that if something isn’t found they either make something up or take some non-issue and make it seem ominous.

Such tactics are common by those who cannot sell themselves on their own accomplishments and who try to make themselves look bigger by making others look small. Such negative press and tactics must take an incredible toll on the families of candidates, and I dare say on us as well, as we begin to believe the lies as truths.

It’s probably good that the American people did not know that both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson suffered from depression, that Abraham Lincoln never joined a church, that Franklin D. Roosevelt suffered from poliomyelitis, which put him in a wheelchair, and that Ronald Regan, who supported McCarthyism, suffered from memory loss (later diagnosed as Alzheimer’s) even before his re-election, otherwise they might not have been elected.

In his March 6 column in this paper Don Swanson expressed the position that one presidential candidate might not be trustworthy because he met with someone who 40 years ago once advocated radical principles, and as a child this candidate attended a multi-cultural school and from that he may have a “Muslim heart beat” in his body.” And somehow, this candidate is less trustworthy and less able to be president because he has a foreign sounding name.

I wonder how Swanson would feel about the names of Powhatan Clarke, Laszio Rabel, Mitchell Red Cloud Jr., Van Barfoot, Yeki Kobeshigawa, Yukio Okutsu, Kiyoshi K. Muranaga, and Jose B. Nisperos being entered into this political race. Now these are names that cry out foreign. How can they be trusted? Before passing judgment you should know they all won the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Our 42 presidents have been members of 11 different faiths and I am fairly certain none of those presidents had any say over how their parents named them. I would hope that in this most critical election we as voters choose our candidate based on their worth as a person, their record, and their potential to lead. Not choosing a person because his name “sounds” Muslin isn’t consistent with conservative or American values, its bigotry.

Matthew Eberz
Highlands and Atlanta

To build or renovate

Dear Editor,

On Tuesday, Feb. 26, a number of people gathered at the community building in Franklin to express an interest in maintaining the concept of community schools. Three county commissioners and two school board members were present.

This writer raised several questions regarding the cost to renovate the older schools versus building new schools. Commissioner Davis had said at the November continuation commission meeting (in response to a question relative to renovating older schools) that the cost to renovate would be prohibitive because of the requirement to bring the buildings up to code. No further explanation was given at that meeting.

There was some discussion of the Americans with Disabilities Act at the Feb. 26 meeting regarding requirements to renovate older schools, but we were not given much in the way of definitive information.

At this point Davis chastised the people raising questions stating that the questions should have been asked during the 10 forums held prior to the referendum (this writer was at one such forum where questions were asked, but they were swept under the rug, as usual).

I guess some of us thought the message of the referendum was clear – no to the projects proposed. I know I personally had hoped that the commission might get the point and go back to the drawing board and come up with different solutions. But then again us mortals didn’t understand that the $40 million for bricks and mortar plus a substantial amount of interest cost was going to be crammed down our throats whether we liked it or not.

I guess Brian McClellan must be a mere mortal, too, as he was the one who asked the question about renovations back in November.

Davis then pulled out several pieces of paper that must have been marked Top Secret because no one was allowed to see them. Davis read off a bunch of numbers from the Top Secret papers and ended by saying that the small schools were costing the county $880,000 per year. He was apparently trying to prove that we would have substantial savings from building mega schools. So assuming the $800,000 is correct...
The following is the Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries for the week of March 6-12.

March 6
• The dept. responded to an accident on N. 4th Street near Twigs. There were no injuries.

March 7
• The dept. responded to an alarm set off by workers at a residence on Woodland Hills Road.
• The dept. responded to an accident on N.C. 28 south. No one was injured.

March 8
• The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call on Sage Drive. The victim was transported to the hospital.

March 9
• The dept. responded to an alarm at a residence on S. Old Walnut Road. It was cancelled.
• The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Sagee Drive. The victim was transported to the hospital.

March 10
• The dept. responded to an accident on U.S. 64 east near The Briar Patch. Two people were taken to the hospital.

March 11
• The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call on Buck Creek Road. The victim was taken to the hospital.

March 12
• The dept. responded to an alarm at a residence on Woodland Hills Road.

March 13
• The dept. responded to an accident on Sagee Drive.

The following is the Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept.

The Briar Patch. Two people were taken to the hospital.

The following is the Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept.

... SCHOOLS continued from page 5

Including upgrading water and sewer at Cullasaja, it would cost $4 million to renovate the school for just 174 students.

Opponents to schools facilities expansion claim proper long-term planning hasn't taken place but, Brigman said that's not true. “We've taken five years to assess facility needs,” he said. “This is not something 'Dan Brigman' initiated when he got here.”

In 1992, a facility-needs long-term plan began with meetings and discussions continuing through July 2007 at which time the Board of Education approved the final revised plan as did the Macon County Commission.

High on the priority list is the elimination of 28 portable classrooms at schools throughout the county.

But Bob Lavery, who spoke during the public session of Monday night’s meeting, suggested that education in portable buildings wasn't such a bad thing. He said there is a school in Bryson City where parents prefer sending their children over the available public school.

However, Brigman said there is a safety issue concerning the portables and the fact that those classrooms and students and faculty are isolated from the rest of the school.

He also said portables aren’t economically wise. “You never recoup money invested in a portable building,” said Brigman.

After East Franklin is renovated – which his being done with free QZAB bond money – the plan is to expedite the construction of the 5-6 school across from Macon Middle School and to build the new school at lot.

The new 5-6 school will remove all fifth-graders from the county’s current K-5 settings which will gain 17% future capacity at each site and remove sixth-graders from the county’s middle schools which will gain 30% for future capacity.

Based on past figures, student populations are expected to increase by 7% by 2011-2012, or to 4752 students. In 2006-2007 enrollment was 4,330, and as of the tenth day of 2007-2008 it was 4,387.

Commission Charlie Leatham said what the county and school board have collaborated on is “all out in the open. “These plans are not elaborate, but they are what’s needed. We need to work together for the betterment of these kids.”

Brigman summed up his presentation saying, “schools expire like humans do. Our students deserve a modern learning environment.”

**PseudoCube©**

#BZ2D  – Level of Difficulty – Easy

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

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

The first correct solution emailed earns a coupon for a FREE cup of coffee from Buck’s Coffee Cafe on Main Street.

Email: pseudocube8@aol.com

**Solution to #AZ1D in March 6 issue**

1. Hello! (2)
2. Get! (slang) (3)
3. Yes! (Sp.) (2)
4. Melodies (5)
5. Embrace (3)
6. Corrosion (4)
7. Color tone (3)
8. U.S. soldier (slang) (2)
9. “mystery word or phrase” (no spaces).

**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 missing letters in all blank squares according to the rules noted above. Focus attention where the least number of letters are needed to complete a line, column or 3 x 3 cell.

**Mystery Word**
“Assured Outcome”

**Across**
1. U.S. soldier (slang) (2)
2. Color tone (3)
3. Corrosion (4)
4. Skinny (4)
5. She (poss.) (3)

**Down**
6. Embrace (3)
7. Melodies (5)
8. Yes! (Sp.) (2)
9. Get! (slang) (3)
10. Hello! (2)

**Solution to March 6 puzzle**

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2008 Highlands Map

Saturday at ITC
St. Patrick’s Day Dance featuring singer Lisa
Price at 8 p.m. Tickets at the door.
$10 for adults, $5 for children.