Brigman foregoes scheduled pay increase

Macon County Schools Superintendent Dan Brigman’s contract called for a 12% pay increase at the end of three years but before the board could act, Brigman made the call.

“According to his contract, he is eligible for a salary increase beginning July 1, but prior to today’s meeting he told me he was voluntarily foregoing the increase,” said School Board Chairman Jim Breedlove, at Monday night’s meeting.

Due to the state of the general economy, as well as the school district budget, Brigman said he wants to postpone any action specified in the contract concerning his pay increase until the economy rights itself. Furthermore, he said the re-instatement would not be retroactive.

The school board instructed Attorney John Henning to prepare documents in agreement with Brigman’s request stipulating that the increase can still go into effect with 30 days notice from Brigman.

This likely came with the latest in bad news from the state concerning school funds.

Prior to the state freezing access to Macon County Schools’ state funds, the central office placed an April 1 deadline for all purchase orders, specifically those POs funded through state allotments. Brigman said this is an annual approach to encourage principals and bookkeepers to spend state dollars first.

Around January, Macon County Schools had to send back to the state approximately $174,000 in state funds. Shortly after, Raleigh warned of a possible second reversion – a requirement to return additional state dollars—to offset the growing shortfall in state revenue.

“Therefore, we continued to emphasize the need to spend all state dollars allocated to schools and departments prior to April 1,”

Abandoned mobile homes; flood plain talk of meeting

After several passes, county commissioners agreed unanimously to enact the county’s new abandoned mobile home removal program effective July 1.

Basically, the voluntary program was suggested to help rid the county of the “blight” of abandoned mobile homes without putting the law to it in the form of another ordinance, said County Chairman Ronnie Beale.

To expedite the removal process, the county will budget $12,000 per year from the general fund with those funds used to credit contractors to demolish, remove and transport the abandoned home to the county’s landfill.

To ensure the county isn’t subsidizing private enterprise, the board agreed to require repayment of any money credited to the property owner if the land is sold within six months after removal and if the same property isn’t kept in a “sanitary state” for those six months. Sanitary state means the

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Lessons from tragedy

Kim Lewicki
Publisher

It’s hard to get your head around the slayings outside the Town & Gown Theatre in Athens, GA, Saturday afternoon. It’s equally hard to comfort a loved one who has a connection with the victims.

When our daughter Megan was cast in the Highlands Playhouse production of “Noises Off” the summer of 2006, she became intimately involved with Marie Bruce, who directed the play. Ben Teague, who worked on the set and even Tom Tanner who she was introduced to in passing. So it was with absolute disbelief we tried to fathom the horrendous finale of Marie and the others.

Since all the cast of Noises Off, except for Megan, were from the Athens, GA area — and some even members of the Town & Gown Theater group — it just made sense to build the set in Athens as well as rehearse there. Normally, all that is done in Highlands, but logistics that summer, made Athens a better choice.

Consequently, Megan lived in Athens with Marie and her two children that summer, working at her law office in a clerical position, and rehearsing with the Noises Off crew at night.

Jim spoke with Marie on set in Athens several times, only new her by voice, prior to seeing the play in Highlands, but learned quickly that she had a big heart as she opened her home to Megan and watched over her while she stayed in Athens.

Any mother knows the relief you feel when another caring mother enthusiastically offers to take care of your child in your absence.

When I called Megan Monday morning, to tell her of the tragedy, she was initially confused.

“What?” “What are you saying, Mom?” “Marie is dead?” “Are the kids OK?”

Then she was inconsolably sad.

“Mom… I meant to go down there last summer and visit.”

I could muster at the time was to say I understood, that life gets in the way, that she should cherish the time she had with Marie and her children and remember them with love.

‘Speech’ is a precious freedom

Dear Editor,

While reading the April 23 issue of Highlands’ Newspaper, I’ve again reminded what a great newspaper I write for. You have massed together some of the most diverse writers any publisher could ask for. For sure, your paper is not boring. It’s fun and interesting to read the opinions from the far right and the far left with an occasional point of view from the middle.

On the left, you have Katy and Matt and I can imagine their points of view making some folks’ blood boil. On the right, there’s Don and John giving an opposite point of view. I’m sure what they say has many fuming.

Maybe you could set up a public mudslinging contest between Katy and Matt on the left versus John and Don on the right. People would pay a lot of money to see that. Isn’t it wonderful to have freedom of speech? Above all else, we should guard that right.

Your paper is also professional because you don’t allow your writers to attack, ridicule or take cheap shots at another writer’s viewpoint. If that were allowed, it would be the end of your paper.

So keep up the outstanding work and continue to give us a free, quality newspaper that Highlands can be proud of.

Fred Wooldridge
Highlands

Letters: To the Editor - Policy

We reserve the right to reject or edit submissions. No anonymous letters will be accepted. 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.

You got the TEA Parties all wrong

Dear Editor,

It was with interest I read your evaluation of the TEA Parties held throughout America on April 15, 2009. Your perception of the bigotry and prejudicial behavior of the participants is an insight into your political and social make up.

I attended only one (Franklin), but viewed several covered nationally by the media. What I saw was dedicated Americans expressing their concerns and fears because of excessive and reckless spending by our Washington representatives.

I hear ignorant and uninformed persons saying “Taxes – What Taxes the President hasn’t increased taxes!” Congress increases taxes. We are experiencing federal spending the likes this nation has never known. Conducted by people who can’t (or won’t) read the legislation they pass. Administrated by folks who can’t or won’t pay their taxes.

Then when the public and the media asks why, none of these people seem to have the answers. We hear things like “It’s got to be done to save the economy.” The “fiddler” will be paid in the form of increased taxes, fees and reduced services.

This experience will be written about in our history for the next 1,000 years.

The liberal media ignored the TEA Parties, except for a few national and local word merchants who weren’t ashamed to show their ignorance. Your political and social labeling of these people as us readers where you live – a resident of the Dinosaur-Wing. This economic grief will expand throughout this nation’s economy to reach us all – the greedy, the lame and the halt.

Well Ms. Lewicki, this will give you and the liberal intellectual’s of the area a ton to shoot at, but “that’s my story and I’m sticking to it.”

J. Bruce Thorne
Franklin

Wake up America!

Dear Editor,

I would like to respond to your forum in part, but also to Don Twardowski’s letter that ran in the April 23 edition of Highlands’ Newspaper, as well. First, in your forum you credited our nation on its Christian heritage, but then try to down play it.

Then telling us that many of the tea party’s is where about skin color?

As with most people it seems you have missed the point of the tea party’s. Skin color has never been a part of the debates has it? If it has I have missed that part. To
Charles Henry Noble III

Charles H. Noble III, 67, Gloucester, MA died on April 23, 2009 after a long battle with cancer. Mr. Noble attended Gloucester Public Schools and was a Graduate of The University of Massachusetts with a degree in Civil Engineering in 1963. He was the only son of Charles Noble, Jr. and Jennie (Strescino) Noble of Gloucester, MA.

Mr. Noble began his career with MassMutual Financial in Springfield, MA., and spent most of his career in Commercial Real Estate, eventually becoming President of IDS Financial Services and later an Executive Vice President with Eliot Bank in Boston. In 1992, Mr. Noble purchased The Hampton River Marina, Hampton, NH, which was later sold in 2004. He and his wife retired in Sarasota, FL where he was an accomplished golfer and sailor.

Mr. Noble is survived by his wife Cheryl Burns-Noble, of Wenham, MA and Cashiers, NC, his mother, two sons, Dr. Charles Noble IV, wife Dr. Stephanie Noble, Oxford, MS, Mark Noble of Chicopee, MA, daughter Kristen Noble, Orlando, FL and three grandchildren.

Services for Mr. Noble will be held at a later date in Gloucester, MA.

In lieu of flowers his family requests donations be made to the American Cancer Society or Hospice.

Between the Falls

Reduced!
Now, $465,000 was $650,000
This dramatic 2 +/- acre waterfall lot looks right at the Big Falls. There is also a smaller falls with moss covered rocks on the other side.

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In light of the present financial crisis, it's interesting to read what Thomas Jeffer

deny our Christian heritage also denies our culture does it not? Times HAVE changed, but is it for the better? Right now there are two girls about to be thrown out of school for just praying for their teacher! Though I agree that race should not be a factor, I think ALL Americans are Americans no matter what their color. BUT, coming to this country has to stand for something. To come to this country the right way, not illegally! To be a melting pot of race is one thing, but to lose our very identity as a culture is another.

Take all the metals in the world like gold, silver, nickel and melt it all down in one pot what do you have then? One useless chunk of metal! All its value is gone! Melting all these cultures together depletes our values. Our heritage is one of the things that made this country great and gave it such great value, but now we can't even pray for another human being without being criminalized!

Also, like the mainstream media, some have tried to down-play these parties! Not seeing what these parties stand for, they think we are protesting paying taxes, when in fact what we are protesting is what our taxes are being used for? This is what the tea parties are all about!

Every American should be angry that our own President stands on foreign soil and denies our own heritage! They should be angry that our Congress would spend millions of our dollar on why pig poop smells in Iowa. That is self explanatory isn't it?

Listen to a couple of quotes from one of the greatest minds that ever lived then look at the direction our country is going then you decide, should we be worried?

Thomas Jefferson made these remarks about our country in the late 1700s & early 1800s. “When we get piled upon one another in large cities, as in Europe, we shall become as corrupt as Europe.” “The democracy will cease to exist when you take away from those who are willing to work and give to those who would not!” “It is incumbent on every generation to pay its own debt as it goes. A principle which if acted on would save one half the wars of the world.” “I predict future happiness for Americans if they can prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people under the pretense of taking care of them.” “My reading of history convinces me that most bad government results from too much government.” “No free man shall ever be debarred the use of arms.” “The strongest reason for the people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is, as a last resort, to protect themselves against tyranny in government.” “The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants.”

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... LETTERS continued from page 2

‘Between the Falls’
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It's brave to be wimpy

What's the last thing you hear a redneck say? "Hey guys, watch this!"

Although I find that little quip funny, it has more validity than humor. There's a thick black line between bravery and stupidity, the keyword being "thick." For the record, I have redneck friends who are both brave and smart....and, yes, I make fun of them so don't write in and blast me.

Consider this: There are those who watch "Jackass" on TV to get ideas to help them act out their lives and are those who watch it for entertainment. Either way, viewers, mostly men, would never want to be thought of as wimps. If you're a woman and watch "Jackass" I'm bettin' you own a motorcycle, scratch a lot and spit between your teeth. Remember, watching "Jackass" builds testosterone while simultaneously lowering IQ.

What, you've never watched "Jackass"? Consider yourself lucky! I accidentally stumbled across it one day and my IQ dropped two full points before I could change the channel.

In the beginning, I was normal like all men. Huge amounts of testosterone raced through my veins and I had to prove my masculinity at least once a day....sometimes more....sometimes more. Oh, I said that. Now, seven decades later, I know exactly who I am and have nothing to prove.

I'm an ex-brave self-made wimp and lovin' every minute of it. I'm a wimp by choice because I'm soooo tired of being brave and macho. I would still come to the rescue...I've always been comfortable in my skin. I never dreamed of being a super hero or macho. I would still come to the rescue...I've always been comfortable in my skin. I never dreamed of being a super hero or macho. I would still come to the rescue.

What would you do? Be brave or stupid?

Whoa! Does that need checking out, or is it just a thick black line between brave and stupid. At this point the l'il missus, not thinking he might be armed, is pushing my buttons, suggesting I take action. I finally did and, fortunately for us, it turned out to be a neighbor.

Then I thought about all the unnamed people of the world who do brave things and risk their lives without all the protections given to a policeman. It's easy to be brave when you're packin' and have the full support of government. But how about the store clerk who wrestles a gun from a robber to save the money in the register that isn't even his? Is he brave or stupid?

Being a wimpy is good. Years ago I was at a BiLo grocery store waiting in a long checkout line. A much younger man in front of me took offense to where I was standing in his line and made several nasty remarks. I could still place the cross hairs of a sniper rifle on a man's head and, on command, blow it off his shoulders and sleep good that evening. I hadn't anything to do with being brave or wimpy; it's about discipline and training. I'm still disciplined.

I no longer yearn for a burglar to break into my home at night. I don't carry a gun, even though I'm certified and licensed to so. I figured after twenty years of retirement without one single attack on my life it's safe to put it away. Besides, I'm getting so old that someone might take it away from me and shoot it....well, use your imagination.

Recently, the l'il missus and I were returning from a South Florida play, another wimpy activity, when we spotted a man dressed in dark clothing and hat carrying a ladder in a dark part of our immediate neighborhood.

Whoa! Does that need checking out, or what? But now that I'm a total wimpy, I was reluctant to approach him in fear he would be armed and put an end to my wimp-hood with one bullet to my head. Remember, there's a thick black line between brave and stupid.

At this point the l'il missus, not thinking he might be armed, is pushing my buttons, suggesting I take action. I finally did and, fortunately for us, it turned out to be a neighbor.

Then I thought about all the unnamed people of the world who do brave things and risk their lives without all the protections given to a policeman. It's easy to be brave when you're packin' and have the full support of government. But how about the store clerk who wrestles a gun from a robber to save the money in the register that isn't even his? Is he brave or stupid?
Sometimes good is the best you can do

The release of CIA memos made big news last week. The memos dealt with “harsh interrogation techniques” or “torture,” depending on one’s point of view.

Most folks in Seneca, S.C. applauded vigorous interrogation of known or suspected terrorists and derided the release of the memos and a ban placed on the use of those techniques in the future. It is reminiscent of steps taken in the 70s to gut the CIA, which hamstrung our intelligence gathering capabilities for years.

There are several important questions. Is torture an effective means of gathering important information? I can’t speak for James Bond or for a dedicated Islamic terrorist, but I’m sure that I would sing like a Viennese choir boy if someone started driving bamboo spikes under my fingernails. I’d like to think that I could limit my responses to name, rank, and serial number, while instructing my interrogators on the nuances of the Geneva Conventions, but I sincerely doubt it.

Opponents of torture claim that subjects will lie under interrogation and will say anything, just to make the pain stop. I, for one, would dread the next session with my torturer after he discovered that I had lied. So, yeah, I suspect that torture is at least somewhat effective in gaining valuable information, especially when bits of information from numerous subjects are compared.

One must then ask if the value of the information is worth the cost to obtain it.

In general, a country would have legitimate concern that if it tortured the enemies’ combatants, the enemy might be inclined to respond in kind. Our Islamic foes have shown no reluctance to torture, maim, and murder. They were hard at work sawing off heads with dull blades long before photos from Abu Ghraib and leaks from Guantanamo Bay surfaced.

With this enemy at least, we need not fear that abusive treatment of their detainees will lead to torture of ours. There is, however, a greater cost. Are we willing, or should we be willing, to sacrifice American values to gain information which might or might not save American lives and those of our allies?

We risk not only ripping our own precious fabric, but abdicating the moral leadership of the world, which has been a valuable asset in achieving justice and maintaining order. We are not viewed as favorably as we once were either by friends or enemies. Our allies shudder at our arrogance. Our Islamic enemies gain new recruits every time we就是因为 a prisoner or defile a copy of the Quran.

The Muslim world is more than willing to believe the worst of us and there may be greater danger in that than in failing to prevent a fully loaded airliner from crashing into a skyscraper. The enemy can use our words and exploit our actions to mobilize the Muslim world against us. Justified or not, that is a profound danger to our civilization.

There are certainly times when the potential cost of interrogation pales compared to the value of information obtained, for example in locating a nuclear bomb in New York City or Highlands, N.C., before it detonates. On the other hand, knowledge that three low-level Al Qaeda operatives are having tea in a remote Afghan village is of very little value and we shouldn’t employ a thumb screw to find out if they’re adding sugar.

The problem is determining in which cases the value of torture outweighs the cost. In some cases, the CIA can’t possibly know until it has exerted a little pressure.

My hope is that President Obama had his fingers crossed when he banned the use of torture. Like military force, it should be used only after other means have been exhausted and it should be used with clear-cut goals in mind. And above all, it must be used in secret. If it is suspected or discovered, we must deny, deny, deny. If in the end, a few FBI, CIA, or DIA agents must be made scapegoats, that is a terrible shame, but it is the cost of freedom.

We can never admit aloud that we value our survival more than we cherish or ideas, but we must ensure one while retaining the other. If that sometimes requires a little torture, OK. But don’t boast of it. Don’t claim that because the other guy does it, it’s justifiable for us. Don’t assume that Imperial America can do as it pleases, because no enemy has the might to challenge us. Remember that a bomb in a crowded mall or an attack on an airliner can slowly bleed us. There is no shortage of bombs or jihadistas to deliver them.

I hate to support torture, but the task of preserving Western Civilization has fallen to us. I wish we could be perfect, but if we can only be good, then good will have to do.
PAY continued from page 1

said Brigman.

All schools, except for Nantahala, started spring break on Friday, April 3. At 5 p.m., Monday, April 13, the day administration returned to work, Brigman received a formal email notice from the State Budget Office and the Department of Public Instruction citing an immediate halt on all state accounts. Any outstanding POs that could not have been completed with materials delivered to the school or district by April 16 were to be cancelled.

In addition, all vacancies and/or hiring are being held on hold.

Monday, April 13, the day administration received spring break on Friday, April 3. At 5 p.m., said Brigman.

In addition, all vacancies and/or hiring are being held on hold.

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His & Hers

Homeland Security's unsecure secretary
by John Armor

Todays comes news that the Secretary of Homeland and Security, Janet Napolitano, is replacing Roger Mackin with Phillip Mudd. Who? What? So?

Roger Mackin was the undersecretary for intelligence and analysis. He was responsible for the memo issued just before the 750+ Tea Parties attended by 1 million+ Americans. You know that memo, which said people who oppose abortion, attend church, and own legal guns are potential terrorists. And don't forget that it also said veterans returning from Iraq or Afghanistan are risky, too.

Before talking about that appalling memo, let's back up a minute. What is the purpose of the Homeland Security Department? It is to protect Americans in their homes, businesses, schools and shopping malls from being slaughtered by (mostly) Islamofascists who have announced their intentions to keep killing Americans, as they did on 9/11.

It is NOT the purpose of Homeland Security to keep President Barack Obama safe in the political polls by creating factually baseless attacks against people who are perceived as his political opponents. Anyone who thinks in terms of protecting the President's political stances, rather than protecting the lives of ordinary Americans should NOT be drawing a paycheck from Homeland Security. So, good riddance to Mr. Mackin.

And welcome to Mr. Mudd, who has a background with the FBI and the CIA, and who might have a better idea of what his mission is. But that brings us to the question of Secretary Napolitano. Unless she was totally incompetent, she had to have seen this memo before it was released, and to have played a role in choosing its release date just before the Tea Parties took place across the nation.

If she thinks that the proper role of Homeland Security is to protect the political butt of the President, rather than to protect the lives of American citizens, she should be dumped as fast as the Secretary of that Department, as Mr. Mackin was dumped as Undersecretary. Is there any evidence that Napolitano has the slightest idea of what her job entails? Evidence that she has in other ways acted to endanger Americans, rather than protect them? Prior to becoming Secretary, Napolitano was Governor of Arizona, a key target for the invasion of illegal aliens from Mexico into the United States. That State passed a series of laws to make it harder for illegal to work in that state, laws which proved very effective and caused many aliens to "self-deport." But those laws were passed over the determined opposition of Napolitano.

Just recently, Napolitano stated in public that the 9/11 attackers came across the Canadian border. That is dead wrong. All 19 of those murderous hijackers entered the US via our own airports and under lax regulations on tourists and students.

This week, Napolitano announced that she wants revisions and relaxation of the REAL ID Act passed by Congress years ago, and now going into effect. That law was occasioned by some states having incredibly lax regulations so that aliens, and terrorists, could easily get US driver's licenses. My state, North Carolina, was a particularly bad example. As I understand, almost half of the 9/11 criminals got their first licenses in North Carolina, which they could then exchange for licenses from any other state.

I was invited to speak to a national meeting of state legislators six years ago on the subject of the security of drivers licenses. I told them that a chain is no stronger than its weakest link; either the states would have to adopt proof of who you are and whether you are a US citizen as a minimum standard for licenses, or Congress would force the issue. Congress did force it, rejecting state drivers licenses as valid ID from those states which still had sloppy standards.

Is Secretary Napolitano too stupid to recognize that obvious point? Or, does she think that following the winds of politics is her higher duty?

Either way, Napolitano needs to be fired as quickly and as publicly possible. The longer she stays, the more likely it is that thousands, tens of thousands, or millions of Americans (if the terrorists smuggle in a nuclear weapon made in North Korea, Iran, or Pakistan) will be killed. In such a case, the murderers who push the button will not be any of those who were slandered in her biased threat memo.

• About the Author: John Armor practiced law in the Supreme Court for 33 years. He now lives on the Eastern Continental Divide in the Blue Ridge of North Carolina.
John_Armor@aya.yale.edu
I thought when the global warming loonies, after 553 of the world’s prominent scientists agreed that their theory was absurd, renamed their cause “climate change,” that we had them on the run. Not so much. By the way, what does climate change mean, anyway... of course the climate changes. There are jokes about it. You know, if you don’t like the weather right now, don’t sweat it (g/w reference intended), it’ll change in a few minutes. So what’s the problem?

The Sun, a U.K. internet news service reports, “Fatties Cause Global Warming.” Here I thought it was steel mills, or cow flatulence or George Bush that caused g/w, and it turns out that it is, (drum roll, please), overweight people. “The rising number of fat people is blamed for global warming. Scientists warned that the increase in big eaters means more food production — a major cause of CO2 gas emissions warming the planet. Overweight people are also more likely to drive, adding to environmental damage.”

These people are relentless. They will stop at nothing to make a pointless point. Dr. Phil Edwards, of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said: “Moving about in a heavy body is like driving a gas guzzler.” WHAT? “Each fat person is said to be responsible for emitting a tonne (they talk funny over there) more of climate-warming carbon dioxide per year than a thin one. It means an extra BILLION TONNES of CO2 a year is created, according to World Health Organization estimates of overweight people.” Marcy.

“The scientists say providing extra grub for them to guzzle adds to carbon emissions that heat up the world, melting polar ice caps, raising sea levels and killing rain forests.” Who would of thought? And what kind of scientific talk is grub - and guzzle? “The impact of forest fires, floods and droughts could overwhelm aid organizations.” Good grief, it sounds like the story line from an Al Gore production.

Enough of that foolishness, let’s talk about the TEA parties. Your humble writer was involved in the one held in Franklin and I’m proud of it. What a curious reaction to the parties nationwide from the mainstream media. One would think that our esteemed Secretary of Homeland Security was putting out talking points to misguided media types.

Janeane Garofalo, idiot comedienne and recent expert on what motivates the common man, was interviewed on MSNBC by idiot Keith Olbermann. Janeane imparted her wisdom by informing the world that every single person that attended a TEA party was motivated by their hatred of the President and that hatred came from their prejudice. The woman must be psychic as well as psycho because she knew what drove EVERYONE to the party.

This theory coincides nicely with her alternative pronouncement that anyone who attended a party was a redneck “tea bagger” which, if you don’t understand the inference, it’s just as well. So far, according to the idiot, I am a prejudiced redneck. I’m OK with the redneck part, but the other white supremacist issue doesn’t work with me. Yes, admitedly I am white, but that wasn’t the luck of the draw and I really had no say in the matter.

Others suggest that we claim to be, or were labeled as “hardworking” which somehow has been contorted to imply that all those who didn’t attend a party were not hardworking. WHAT? And we somehow fail to understand that our country was built by hardworking non-white people and where do we get off claiming to be the only ones who work hard? Good grief!

Some accuse us of being bigoted. If I can take the liberty of mixing some metaphors, I am now a prejudiced, bigoted, hardworking, redneck white person. And now for the “coup de grace,” We are Christians. Oh, no, not that. Yup, that’s us.

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**SPiritually Speaking**

**Jack the Newt**

Or what does this have to do with worship?

David, Jacob, my two sons, and I love to do outdoors kind of stuff. We feel we've hit the jackpot here in the mountains. We mostly like to ride our bikes, but we also like to hike, to explore, to climb trees, to play ball and sometimes it involves, water, either rain or large bodies of water, lakes or oceans.

A while ago, David and I were ever on hiking on the “Yellow Mountain Trail”. It was rainy and dreary—a great time to be outside.

We were sauntering along, well more like strolling along, clambering over rocks and roots, and making noise to scare off the bears. When something bright and colorful in the gray and dreary landscape caught our attention.

Kids have great eyesight, possibly because their “ocular equipment” is still pretty new, as compared to us, the more mature.

“Dad! Look!” David said.

He pointed to a twig beside the trail and sure enough it looked like a lizard, just roving along the twig.

Well, I don’t know my lizards and thought it might be “poisonous” because it did not look like an ordinary lizard. So, I hesitated to pick it up. But David was braver and fetched up the little dude just like that. “Cooool!”

It was orange, a deep orange with a reddish tint. It was so orange that it almost looked like a miniature alien beast, like the kind you get in kids’ meals at McDonald’s or Wendy’s — but this one moved, “It was alive! Ahhhhh!”

Well, the little guy did not attack us with his razor like fangs or inject us with neurotoxin poison. He just curled up in David’s hand and went to sleep.

I guess since it was cool outside and he found the hand to be a warm cubby hole to snooze in.

“He’s name is Jack . . . “, David said. “I’m going to call him Jack.”

So what was this little gem, huh? After researching a bit I learned that our buddy was a newt.

A newt (”noot” like saying “new” and adding a “t” at the end) is a kind of reptile, like a lizard, it has four legs and is of the salamander family. This newt was a Carolina Red Spotted Newt, also known as an Eastern Newt. Its scientific designation is *Notophthalmus viridescens viridescens*. “We saw two of them. They were actually “efts.” An eft is a baby newt. When these little guys are still young they are a bright orange color, but as they mature they turn dark green with red spots.

As I researched I also found that here in North Carolina we have 40 different common kinds of these salamanders, wow! Our area is sometimes known as the salamander capital of the world, wow! They have names like “greater siren” or “lesser siren” and “mudpuppy” and “dwarf waterdog.” Some have legs, some don’t. Some have tails, some don’t. Most are really slimy. Some are pretty cute, some more dragnonesque.

Well, we now have a friend on the Yellow Mountain Trail and his name is: Jack the Newt.

So what does Jack the Newt have to do with worship? Well nothing everything.

Nothing: he’s just a newt . . . he can’t talk to us about worship, or write a treatise on it, but . . . everything: because Jack had an important message to us from God even though he is mute.

He reminded us that God is great and does great things.

Jack was cool, and on the Yellow Mountain Trail standing there all wet. David and I were mesmerized by his color, orange, by his movement, by the intricacies of his body: legs, feet, we wanted to know more about him, how he was made, how he lived. We were in awe . . .

I said to him, “David, isn’t God great.”

“Yep . . . He makes cool stuff.”

It seemed too simple, but we had just worshiped God.
property has not been allowed to fall into disrepair or to be used for the storage of waste, junk cars or other debris.

The sale of the property and keeping it in a sanitary state, was a major point of discussion at Monday's meeting, because some commissioners felt the purpose of the voluntary program was to clean up Macon County so repayment shouldn't be an issue. “The goal is to get rid of abandoned mobile homes and the blight they cause on the neighborhood,” said Commissioner Jim Davis. “With them gone, everyone's property value will go up.”

However, Commissioner Brian McClellan said he wanted some sort of time limit in the program documentation and suggested changing it from 12 months to six months in both cases. “Otherwise I feel we are using county money to subsidize private interests and a potentially profitable venture.” Commissioners agreed that it would be easier and more profitable for a property owner to sell property without an abandoned mobile home on it.

Stahl estimates permitting and tipping fees for a standard single-wide mobile home will be in the range of $350-$500. It’s not known at this time how much contractors will charge to demolish, remove and transport the mobile home fill to the landfill, but the county is willing to credit up to $1,000 toward the process.

Macon County will contract with private vendors for the demolition, transport and disposal of the home. For property owners who choose to use a contractor listed with the county, assistance credit may be used toward demolition permit fees, demolition and transport costs and/or landfill tipping fees. For property owners who wish to provide their own demolition and transportation services with prior approval from the county, assistance credit may only be used toward the demolition permit fees and landfill permit fee.

Failure to comply with proof of payment requirements, selling before the six-month period or failing to keep the property sanitary for six months will result in the county filing of a Confession of Judgment with the court to recoup all assistance credits.

Since the county has never had such a program, commissioners want statistics backing it to be presented at the December 2009 meeting so they can see if it's fiscally working for the county.

The program is limited to one home per property owner per year. The program isn’t for any homes brought into Macon County and abandoned.

Flood Plain Ordinance
Due to the extent of the disaster at Peek’s Creek in 2004 and the significant loss of life, Macon County was the first county in Western North Carolina to get the updated Flood Plain map from FEMA.

With that now in the can, the Macon County Watershed Council and the Macon County Commission adopted amendments to the flood plain ordinance that was formally adopted about a year ago.

For county property to be eligible for inclusion in the National Flood Insurance Program, the final version of the flood plain which goes into effect May 4, 2009, has to be accompanied by the amended ordinance. “Basically administrative changes have been incorporated in this final version of the ordinance,” said Bob Wright with the MC Watershed Council. “There are no major changes.”

Changes include definitions of “High Impact” businesses that aren’t allowed in the flood plain or floodway. “The types of businesses had to be listed, rather than just referring to them as 'high impact' businesses.”

Since Macon County has experienced

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**Mon-Thurs. 10-6, Fri & Sat. 10-8, Sun 1-6**
O
K, so I must preface
this column with
the admission that I
myself am fairly supersti-
tious. I had my own rituals
before game day in high
school, and I will sometimes
don my Saints apparel before
crucial games during the NFL
season. Unfortunately, my
own little superstitions have
no effect on the actual game,
but still doesn’t stop me
from feeling like I am not “doing my part” if
I am not wearing my socks inside out (which
I have since high school).

Superstitions can be a powerful thing,
and they can certainly become synonymous
with certain players throughout their career,
and are obviously more unusual that
others. Michael Jordan famously wore his
Carolina shorts under his uniform for every
game, which seems reasonable enough, but
some are just downright strange. For ex-
ample, Nomar Garciaparra’s pre-at bat ritual
is one of the strangest and most unusual things
in baseball-they add you in the fact that he
to get dressed the exact same way before
every game. Reliever Turk Wendell refuses to
stop a ceiling fan when correctly placed.

The most notable time was in 2004, when
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Shame on Haire

Dear Editor,

We recently wrote our NC Representatives regarding the proposed tax increases and 2009 budget. What we received from Representative Phillip Haire (District 19) was astonishing. The letter consisted of two sentences...the last being “Thanks for the tea and let me know when the bon voyage party will be held for your trip back to England!”

This arrogant response was quite unexpected. Do we not pay his salary? And how can he not even consider our concerns? Astonishing. Do we not pay his salary? And how can he not consider our concerns? Astonishing. Do we not pay his salary? And how can he not consider our concerns? Astonishing.

Robert & Terre’ Berry
Highlands

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Our 69th Season on Main St. in Highlands!

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Cabin Casuals

Wit's End

ANNAWEAR

Huge Jean Sale!!
On-going Events
Registration is now open for the 2009 summer nature day camps at the Highlands Nature Center. Five different camps are offered: "WOW! – a World of Wonder" (ages 4-6), "Amazing Animals" (ages 7-10), "Mountain Explorers" (ages 10-14), and "Junior Eco- gists" (ages 11-15). Some camps are offered more than once during the summer. Sessions run from Tuesday to Friday each week. For complete schedules, costs, and other information, please call 828-526-2623 or visit www.highlandsnc.com.

Friends of Panthertown work days, last Thursday of every month (time and location varies). Volunteers needed to maintain trails. For more information, contact Nina Elliott at 828-526-9038 ext 258.

Refuge Youth meets every Sun. night at 6:30 p.m. downstairs at Cullasaja Assembly of God. If you are in grades 6th-12th then this is the place to be! The church is located at 6201 Highlands Rd. next to Exxon. For more info call youth ministers Matt and Candace Woodroof at 828-369-2874.

Yoga at the Rec Park, 7-8 a.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. Call 526-4340 for information.

Yoga in the bottom floor of Jane Woodruff Building, 10-11 a.m. Thursdays. Call 526-4340.

NA open meeting every Saturday at 7:30 p.m. at the ACC Satellite Group at the Graves Community Church, 242 Hwy 107 N. in Cashiers. Call 888-764-0385.

Crew prepares for ‘Rumors’ opening May 7
Each player performed on the stage of the Performing Arts Center by the Highlands Cashiers Players is a visual connection between actor and playwright. But behind the scenes work are moments of magic that audiences seldom understand. A perfect play doesn’t just come from the weeks of rehearsals of the dedicated actors and actresses who prepare for their moment on stage. There is costuming set design, sound and lighting that must be as choreographed as the players’ movements onstage to transform a play into a performance.

The upcoming HCP production of Neil Simon’s Rumors is putting the final touches on all of its behind the scenes elements before the curtains go up at its May 7 opening night.

Set designer Gary Clark is leading his all-volunteer team in transforming the PAC stage into an upper crust New York home. Socialites Charlie and Myra Bross, Jim Schulte, Dr. Paul Black, Fritz Tousaint, Tony Long, Victoria Clark and Cathy Clark are taking hammer and nails to build the multi level set. Robin Phillips, Clair Simpson and David Rohrer are assisting with painting.

While the construction crew is getting its paint buckets primed, mother-daughter team Joan Levinson and Barbara Werdler are adding the finishing touches onto their costumes. Everything must be perfect match and a perfect fit for the performers to portray these social elite of 1990. Barbara and Joan have a long-time association with HCP having worked on at least eight plays over the last decade. Lee Lyons is back on board with this production as procurer of props. Lyons has volunteered in several other roles working with HCP including behind the scenes as stage manager and on stage as well.

Joining the team as sound designer is Robert Drakefrom Atlanta. Drake first became involved with HCP during last year’s musical extravaganza, a Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum. Jim Gordon is no stranger to HCP, is working as Robert’s right hand man.

Robert brings with him new comer Aaron Gottlieb to work as light designer. Aaron earned a bachelor of fine arts in Design and Technical Theater at Georgia Perimeter College and Columbus State University.

Newcomer to HCP tech crew Phyllis Tietzes from working the light board. Phyllis comes with a lot of experience having set and run the light board at St. Petersburg College in Florida. In Clearwater, Fla., she spent six years as lighting director for Footlight Theatre.

Former HCP performer, Linssey Wisdon, is working on stage and off for this production. On stage she plays an office job, but her full time commitment is behind the scenes working as the stage manager. Linssey helps to coordinate the technical staff and acts as the right hand to director Donna Cochran and assistant director Peggi Fuller.

It takes the entire team to add all the finishing touches required to transform a play into a performance.

Rumors will be running May 7-10 and 14-17. For ticket information, contact the box office at 828-526-8084 or online at highlandscashiersplayers.org.

Crew prepares for ‘Rumors’ opening May 7

The Highlands News: Volunteer Jim Schulte working with set designer Gary Clark constructing the two-story stage for Neil Simon’s Rumors. The HCP production opens at the Performing Arts Center May 7. For ticket information, contact the box office at 526-8084.

Grant deadline approaching
The Macon County Community Foundation is pleased to be able to offer grants from the Macon County Grantmaking Endowment for 2009. Proposals are sought in support of broad charitable purposes in the areas of arts and humanities, education, the environment, health, human services, public and societal benefit, and youth development.

Monies are available for non-profit, tax-exempt organizations addressing these needs in Macon County. Grants typically range from $750 to $1,500. Total grantmaking in 2009 will not exceed $12,000.

Please visit: www.nccommunityfoundation.org to download an application or call 1-800-201-9532 to obtain one by mail.

Grant proposals are due and must be received on or before May 15. The Grants Committee will consider eligible proposals and determine grant awards. Reporting requirements from any prior NCCF grants must be fulfilled before new applications will be accepted. Proposals may be awarded in full or in part, awarded with contingencies, or they may be declined. All grants decisions are final. Any questions regarding the application process should be directed to the Grants Committee by June 30, 2009.

Highlands Little League Baseball Schedule
- May 1 6pm 9/10A’s vs Indians
- May 2 10am 9/10A’s vs Twins
- May 8 6pm 9/10A’s vs Reds
- May 9 10am 7/8Twins vs Reds
- May 12 12pm 9/10A’s vs Twins
- May 14 6pm 9/10A’s vs Red Sox
- May 15 6pm 7/8Twins vs Yankees
- May 15 2pm 9/10A’s vs Red Sox
- May 28 6pm 9/10A’s vs Dodgers
- May 30 10am 7/8Twins vs Twins
- May 31 2pm 9/10A’s vs Indians
- June 4 6pm 9/10A’s vs Twins
- June 6 10am 9/10A’s vs Cardinals

All games are at the Zachary Park on Buck Creek Road and are subject to change due to weather.
Think mountain hardy perennials!

By Emily Compost

Spring is here and it’s time to think about new additions for your flower garden.

Locally grown perennials, proven hardy in our mountains, are great selections. You can find a wide variety of mountain hardy perennials at the Mountain Garden Club Plant Sale in Highlands on May 23.

Every perennial sold at the Mountain Garden Club plant sale comes from plants that have weathered our mountain extremes. Their roots of these tough plants are hardy, able to tolerate cold dry winter winds and temperatures as low as 10 below. Each spring and summer healthy flower stalks and buds emerge, bringing flowers of all shapes and colors.

If your garden has full sun to partial shade, good choices include hardy geraniums, gooseneck, and goldenrod. Yes, goldenrod!

Goldenrod (Solidago spp.) provides reliable, beautiful end-of-summer color, and no matter what you may have heard, goldenrod blooms do not cause hay fever. Many people assume the showy yellow blooms of goldenrod, which emerge in late summer and early fall, cause nasal allergy symptoms.

Not true. Goldenrod is a scapegoat for ragweed, which blooms at the same time. Ragweed pollen is easily carried by the wind, and many people are allergic to it. In contrast, goldenrod pollen is sticky and only spreads by insects, not by the wind. That means you can enjoy the blazing beauty of goldenrod every year, without sneezing or battling itchy, watery eyes

Garden Club Plant Sale

Mountain hardy perennials will be available at the Garden Club Plant Sale on May 23. Check out the great selections. You can also bring rewards for years to come. For good results, buy good quality plants.

Cranesbill geranium

Gooseneck, also called loosestrife (Lysimachia ciliata) can stabilize a sloping bank, while providing you with graceful, white draping blooms for most of the summer. Good as a cut flower, too, gooseneck rapidly reproduces itself when given room to spread.

Cranesbill geranium (Geranium sanguineum), makes a great perennial groundcover in full sun to partial shade. These carefree plants provide weeks of pink to lilac blooms on 9 to 12 inch stems in late spring and early summer. Unlike tender ‘greenhouse geraniums’ (which are really Pelargoniums, not geraniums), Cranesbill geraniums overwinter here beautifully. Each spring, adding this adaptable, sturdy plant to your landscape.

In a garden area with shade or partial shade, celandine poppies and columbines are great plants to consider.

Cranesbill geranium (Geranium sanguineum) come in a variety of colors and many plants have bicolor blooms. Flower stalks can be 1 to 3 feet tall. Let Columbine go to seed and you’ll be rewarded with seedlings to transplant elsewhere in your flower border or rock garden.

With the proper soil and a minimum of care, mountain hardy perennials will bring rewards for years to come. For good results, buy good quality plants.

The 27th Annual Mountain Garden Club Plant Sale will be May 23, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the baseball park in Highlands on Highway 64 E. See you there!
THE TOWN OF HIGHLANDS IS SEEKING A FULL TIME SANITATION EQUIPMENT OPERATOR I – Required to obtain a Commercial Drivers License (CDL) within 90 days of employment. Applicants must have the ability to perform strenuous physical work. For information about this position, direct inquiries to Sonjia Gibson at the Highlands Town Office (828)526-2118.

HOUSEKEEPER – Happy person who loves clean homes needed in Sapphire Valley once per week May through October. 561.706-7555. 4/30

TECHNOLOGY SAVVY CUSTOMER FRIENDLY? NEW OWNERS of the Highlands Radio Shack seeking part time employees. Call 526-3350 or stop by for application. Ask for Josh or Wendi. Email: trilliumt@gmail.com (at 4/22)

HIRING FOR TWO NEW RESTAURANTS – Back of the house and front of the house needed. Call 526-3380 or 342-5174.

RN NEEDED FOR UPHILL COURSE NURSING – 8 hours per week. Apply at Chestnut Hill, 64 Clubhouse Trail, Highlands, NC. Or email your resume to dobyguertner@gmail.com. Drug screening and background check required. EOC

THE TOWN OF HIGHLANDS IS SEEKING A PART-TIME IT PROFESSIONAL (16-24 hrs/week). This person should have knowledge of a server oriented environment and a background in web design and programming, particularly in html and asp. For information about this position, direct inquiries to Matt Shuler at the Highlands Town Office (828) 526-2118.

MEDICAL ASSISTANT/NURSE – needed at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Physician office setting, full-time position available. Current certification and/or NC license and BLS required. ACLS recommended. Full benefits, or the option to opt out of benefits for an increase in pay, available after 60 days of full-time employment. Pre-employment screening required. Call Human Resources at 828-526-1376 or apply online at www.hchospital.org.

RECEPTIONIST – needed at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Physician office setting, full-time position available. Previous medical/office practice office experience required. Full benefits, or the option to opt out of benefits for an increase in pay, available after 60 days of full-time employment. Pre-employment screening required. Call Human Resources at 828-526-1376 or apply online at www.hchospital.org.

LOST & FOUND

LOST – A MALE BLACK Cat, Keera, lost in vicinity of Mt. Lon and N. Cobb. Wearing a hot pink rubber flea collar. Please call Tonya at 828-301-3660, 526-1706 or cell: 828-301-3606.

FOUND: POOL CUE. Call 404/237-4333

RESIDENTIAL FOR RENT

3-BEDROOM, 2 1/2 BATH, New paint inside and out. New carpet. LowerApartment. $199,000. Cashiers Area. Call 743-1107 or 371-3600. 4/30

4 Bedroom 2 bath, LR, DR, Sun room (Queen), one bath, vaulted ceiling in great room, heat and air with gas fireplace. Fully furnished with W/D, cozy and comfortable. Reduced to $650 a month plus utilities. Call 526-4983 or 421-3614.

1 BED, 1 BATH and small room with bunk beds on Lake Sequoyah. Furnished, two boats. $800 a month including utilities except phone. No pets. No smoking. Call Tony at 828-332-7830.

SAPPHIRE NC – 2 Story 3bed/3 Bath. Yr round views, 2 decks, remodeled, Furnished, 2 car garage. Available yearly or seasonal. 561-526-9556

FURNISHED 3BD/3BATH HOUSE IN MIRROR LAKE area available for 6-12 month lease $1200+ utilities. Call 770-977-5692.

SBR, 2BA COTTAGE NEAR MIRROR LAKE – In town. $1,250 per month. Very clean. 770-977-5692.


COTTAGE FOR RENT – 1BR, 1BA in town @ Chestnut Cottages. Private, screen porch. Heat/AC, FP, extra sleeping loft, furnished or unfurnished. 6 month lease - $750. monthly plus utilities. Call 526-1884.

COMMERCIAL FOR RENT

RENTAL SPACE IN WRIGHT SQUARE – Half a building or two floors of one building. Call Harold Brammer. 828-526-5673. 4/16

2,300+ SF. FT. OF OFFICE/RETAIL available for lease or rent to own. Excellent visibility! Location is 2271 Dillard Road. Asking $1,250 per month. 526-8953.

VACATION RENTAL

RESTORED FARMHOUSE ON SHORTOFF ROAD. – 2 bedrooms, 2 baths in a country setting. Well furnished with a large screened porch. See details and pictures at www.homeaway.com. #26344 $800 per week. (912)354-6917.

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, No min. Call 628-342-2302.
**ITEMS FOR SALE**

16x12 ENCLOSED TRAILER — Haulmark Transport D/LX. White, 3 doors, transport package, never on highway, like new. $2,000. 828-526-0974 or 521.

100+ YR OLD CHERRY DINING TABLE — will seat up to 10 people w/ drop-leaf, rope-carved legs, $1,200 or best offer. Will deliver for small fee. Call 828-787-1515.

ANTIQUE 8 AIR CYLINDER MUSIC BOX — ca 1880s mahogany & rosewood marquetry — good condition - PLAYS. Serious buyers/collectors only call 828-715-1515.

ORVIS FLYFISHING COMBO — Battenkill Pils II 7 7/2 red and Cleamwater mid 5 7/2 red. One year old but NEVER used. Orvis Padded reel case and rod tube/flag included. $200. 828-399-9427.


**RANGE WITH DOWNDRAFT**

HIGH. $175. Call 526-5749.

HOGANY BASE. Will settle for $500; base, extras and help setting. 64 pieces. $385. Also, accessory pieces available. Call 828-524-3614.

**DINING TABLE (LARGE) WITH MATCHING CREDENZA,** oak, leather chair. $850. Call 743-6869.


4 SOLID OAK, LADDERBACK DINING ROOM CHAIRS with woven seats. $400 for set. Call 526-3048.

**ANTIQUE WOODEN ROCKING CHAIR FROM HOLLAND 1900's** Full refinished. $100. 396-5683.

AVON CAPE COD RED GLASS — 8 piece place setting. 64 pieces. $385. Also, accessory pieces available. Call 828-524-3014.

DESK (LARGE) WITH MATCHING CREDENZA, oak. Leather chair. $850. Call 743-6869.


4 SOLID OAK, LADDERBACK DINING ROOM CHAIRS with woven seats. $400 for set. Call 526-3048.


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**HANDYMAN SPECIAL —** Repairs and Remodeling, Electrical and Plumbing, Carpentry and more. Low prices. For free estimate call 828-342-7864.

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

**LANDSCAPE CLEANUP —** leafs, gutters and more. Call Juan at 200-2049 or 562-8525.

**FIREWOOD “Nature Dried”** Call 526-2251.

**HOME SECURITY SYSTEMS**

**RELIABLE HOME SECURITY SYSTEMS —** Adelgida Trea

**828-200-1160 or highlandsnative@yahoo.com.**

**MIRROR LAKE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

hand and have any additional funding committed.

McGill and Associates, the town’s consulting engineer, worked diligently with Town Engineer Lamar Nix to complete the design and obtain permits in less than two months to meet the grant application deadline.

The Town Board approved the design contract at its Feb. 4 meeting for both the Mirror Lake and Lake Sequoyah Sewer Projects. The Mirror Lake Sewer Project will be bid within 30 days with work starting in late August or early September. The construction time frame is nine months.

Fatland said that another high priority project, Lake Sequoyah Sewer, will be submitted by the June 3 deadline for the second round of ARRA funds.

The Mirror Lake Sewer Project will extend sewer service to 140 residences on Mirror Lake Road, Hicks Road, Billy Cabin, East Wingina, Wingina, Parquin, Wyanack, Hickory Hill, Chown and Nesi Place. The project includes 10,150 linear feet of 8-inch ductile iron gravity lines along with a sewage pump station.

According to Nix, the policy that was adopted for Harris Lake Sewer, will be implemented for the Mirror Lake Sewer. Under the Harris Lake Sewer Policy, a homeowner can pay the connection fee of $2,500 and

See MIRROR LAKE page 22


... LETTERS continued from page 14

I got the information about the existence of the International Friendship Center from my friends. My first thoughts were “what if I am not enough competitive to come to this center?” “will the staff of the center provide assistance to an international student from Europe?” “Should I go?”

When I went, was met by two very professional and intelligent ladies: Jill Montana and Faviola Olvera. First, I was welcomed very and very helpful and important. Second, both ladies gave me as much time as I needed in order to explain in my case. Third, I have got an informational support, handouts, and other necessary data.

Being in a foreign country, not knowing anything it is very easy to make a lot of mistakes. That is why the activity of the International Friendship Center in Highlands it is very and very helpful and important.

... MEETING continued from page 9

There is confusion that the Friendship Center provides assistance to Latinos. From this point, I am writing this letter to encourage everybody of all nationalities to come and get assistance.

I do strongly believe that the International Friendship Center is a huge help for every single customer who needs guidance and other directions. I would like to say thank you to the center representative for their professional assistance, generous help, and encouragement.

Olga Catinsus
Highlands

... PAY continued from page 6

of personnel was also frozen if the position was funded through state dollars. “We were able to complete most of the outstanding POs, but several were cancelled due to the inability for us or the vendors to meet the April 16 delivery deadline,” said Brigman. “So, on April 13 we shut down all new POs and access to state funds as directed.”

At Monday’s meeting Finance Director Betty Waldrop showed the implications of the freeze and returning approximately $408,655.90 in total dollars to the state.

Brigman said that’s a lot of money to send back to the state, but luckily Macon County spent almost all of the original allocations prior to the freeze.

Henning and the board commended Brigman “for doing the right thing.”

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17391, 1845, 1876, 1916, 1940, 1949, and 2004, it’s important to do what’s necessary to be included in the flood insurance program, said Wright.

“No other program or homeowner policy provides insurance covering this well-known hazard,” he said. “Each of the major floods experienced by Macon County have caused extensive loss of property and in 2004 at Peeks Creek a significant loss of life was seen.”

The MC Watershed Council, the Macon County Emergency Services Department and the Macon County Commission all agree that the flood ordinance protects citizens by requiring safer development in the small percentage of Macon County that contains flood prone areas. Between 2%-3% of Macon County land is in the floodplain.

The only commissioner to vote “nay” to the amendments was Commissioner Bob Simpson. He has voted against the ordinance from the start on the grounds that the county has no mechanism in place to compensate property owners for the land they “give up” due to the flood ordinance being on the books. “We have no compensation in place when we’re basically not letting citizens do what they want with their property,” he said.

Representatives from the county planning department said they want to allow people to develop, but if they want to do it in the floodplain and specifically in the floodway, they must comply with certain safeguards.

“The family developing the property on the Highlands Road along the Cullasaja River has been told “no” several times by the commission when they asked for variances concerning development in the floodplain. However, the planning department worked with them and since they agreed to build their home 12 feet high without impeding the potential flow of the river should get that point, he is allowed to build 25 feet from the river.

Furthermore, Simpson said the flood insurance program only pays out $150,000 and for some structures in the floodplain, that’s not enough compensation.

However, since damage from most storms which bring flooding, is usually covered by Hazard Insurance, the flood insurance serves as additional insurance.
**Police & Fire**

The following are the Highlands Police Dept. log entries for the week of April 13. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor, or public officials have been used.

**April 15**
- Officers responded to a call of missing outdoor items at a home on Big Bearpen Lane. A bench and concrete bear were taken.

**April 20**
- At 4:21 p.m., officers responded to an alarm at a residence on Bowery Road and found the rear door open. Inside it appeared someone had been living there, but the owner couldn't be reached. Spent ammunition casings were found on the kitchen and dining room floor and a marijuana pipe was found on the kitchen counter.

**April 21**
- At 1:30 p.m., officers issued an ordinance violation concerning an abandoned car on Webbmont Road.
- At 8:25 a.m., officers took a report of injury to property for the front grill of a truck that was damaged while parked at the hardware store.
- At 8:20 p.m., officers were called concerning an assault on a female during a domestic dispute at a residence on Pine Circle. Warrants were issued.

**April 24**
- Officers were called to Franklin Road where a man was attempting to set up a tent. He was told tents weren't allowed within the town limits.
- Officers responded to an animal complaint at a residence on Hickory Road concerning the incessant barking of a dog on Wyanoak Road.

**April 26**
- At 11 a.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident in Highlands Plaza.
- At 9:07 p.m., officers conducted a welfare check at a residence on South Drive. All was OK.

**April 27**
- At 7:21 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle collision on U.S. 64 east where an impaired driver crossed the center line and collided with an oncoming car occupied by three people. All three were injured and transported to the hospital. The impaired driver voluntarily submitted to a blood test. The case is still under investigation.

The following are the Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries for the week of April 20:

**April 22**
- The dept. responded to a brush fire on Harbison Orchard Road. It was quickly extinguished.
- The dept. responded to two-vehicle accident on U.S. 64 east. Three people were injured and transported to the hospital.

**April 24**
- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call on Main Street. The victim was transported to the hospital.

**April 26**
- The dept. responded to a possible structure fire on Stacey Russell Road where an outside lamp caught a bathroom vent on fire which damaged the edge of the roof. Damage is estimated at $5,000.
- The dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Lake Sequoyah Drive. No one was home.
- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Wilson Mack Road. The victim was transported to the hospital.

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... SWANSON from page 7

Evil Christians. Acting like agents of the devil. Well now, if that wouldn't twist your britches. Man, this sounds more and more like a Napolitano hit list.

So, to sum up the situation, the enlightened, elitist, tolerant left-immersed media would have us un-washed, inbred, knuckle dragging Neanderthals go back into our caves and shut-up. I just remembered the idiot Garofalo stated as fact that none of us, NO ONE knows what the Boston Tea Party was about and the parties had nothing to do with taxes. All about hatred. Well I've got news for you all.

The Great Unifier is doing a poor job of bringing us together. If we're choosing up sides, count me in with the prejudice-free, hardworking, God-fearing people standing up for their God, the Constitution and the freedom it guarantees, low taxes and fiscal responsibility. The liberals can have what's left.

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**Fun & Games**

**Hex-a-Ku©** 2009
by Pete Sarjeant and Don Cook

**OBJECT:**
A mystery word or phrase using all different letters is designated by circled squares (other short words will appear when solving, for which a list of meanings is provided). Every puzzle has a different mystery word or phrase (no spaces). Assign different letters to each square of each column and row. In addition, 3x2 cells in the puzzle layout have the same different letters. (This is similar to Sudoku but uses letters instead of numbers.)

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

**Mystery Word:**
Lifted

**Across**
1. Atmosphere (3)
2. George Gershwin’s brother (3)
3. Rainbow’s 1st color (3)
4. Expire (3)

**Down**
5. Exist (2)

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**PseudoCube©**
by Pete Sarjeant and Don Cook

**#DN2A Level of Difficulty - Hard**

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

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

Email: pseudocube8@aol.com.

**Solution to #BN2A in April 23 issue**

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**Solution to April 23 Hex-a-Ku**

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have the sewer hooked up to their home. If the homeowner waits until after the construction has been completed, they would be required to pay the $2,500 connection fee and pay for the additional cost to hook up to their home. Harris Lake Sewer will provide 106 sewer connections which over 95% of the residences have agreed to hook up immediately.
Russell Harris's last day is April 30

Russell M. Harris, CFRE, FAHP, executive director of the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital Foundation for the past two and a half years, announced this week he will leave his post at the end of April.

While he said he has enjoyed his tenure with the Foundation, Harris said Monday he believes his background and particular style of fundraising are really better suited to a different opportunity.

“I love the hospital and I’ve enjoyed working with the many other professionals here, but I don’t feel that I’ve been able to be as effective as I would like during my time with the Foundation,” he said. “Most of my experience in non-profit philanthropy has been in building business, corporate, and governmental relationships. The Foundation needs someone whose gifts lie more in individual, peer to peer relationships.”

Earle Mauldin, chairman of the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital Foundation Board, praised Harris’s devotion to the hospital and the Foundation during what, at times, was a difficult period in the hospital’s history.

“It’s always hard to raise money, even in the best of times. But when there is controversy, as there has been in the past, and now given the current economic situation, it’s doubly difficult. Despite everything, Russell has remained dedicated to the hospital, and he gave the job his best effort,” he said.

Mauldin said the Foundation’s board will begin a search for a replacement immediately. He said the Foundation’s offices will continue to operate as usual during the interim.

“I will certainly miss working with the great physicians, the hospital staff, and the many, many wonderful people I’ve met through the Foundation,” Harris concluded.

“The most important reason for me leaving is the feeling that this is the right decision. I wish the hospital the very best and I hope those who have so faithfully supported the hospital through the Foundation for so many years will continue to do so in the future. That’s crucial if these communities want to continue to have quality healthcare close by.”

… FORUM continued from page 2

Evidently, George Zinkhan, Marie’s husband, teaches in Amsterdam for six weeks each summer and that’s where he was when Megan was with Marie.

As Megan watched the story unfold on television, she would text me and say, “I feel like I met George, or something, his face is familiar, but I’m sure he wasn’t there.”

I suggested she was remembering photos of him displayed about Marie’s home because after Noises Off Marie went to Europe to spend time with George.

The next text was “Well, I definitely rode in the getaway car,” referring to the red jeep Cherokee.

Life is full of lessons and even this tragedy has one.

Since life gets in the way, it’s critical to learn to recognize the encounters and relationships that will leave a mark on your heart before they end. In this way, no matter what happens, the moments can be remembered fondly and cherished forever.