1.5 cent tax hike set for July 2010

At the Nov. 17 Macon County Commission meeting, the board voted unanimously to raise the current tax rate per $100 valuation from 26.4 cents to 27.9 cents, effective July 1, 2010.

Now may not appear to be the time to raise taxes, but like the old saying goes: “You have to spend money to make money.” The money raised through the tax hike will be used to finance the debt incurred to build the new K-4 school and make renovations and repairs to Franklin High School and Nantahala School. Those three construction projects will in turn put people to work, say commissioners.

“There were several reasons why now was a good time to raise the tax rate,” said Commission Chair Ronnie Beale. “The construction of the North Macon School concludes the major construction for Macon County Schools for many years to come and low interest rates combined with low construction costs helped us make the decision.”

Annual Christmas parade is Saturday, Dec. 5

The Highlands School band is just one of scores of participants lined up for this year’s annual Christmas parade in Highlands. The parade starts at 11 a.m. on Main Street. You can’t miss it!

Planning Board says ‘no’ to ordinance again

At Monday night’s Planning Board meeting, members once again stonewalled the Town Board’s attempt to get an “Abandoned Building” ordinance on the books.

Planning Board Chairman Griffin Bell took offense to the Town Board’s claim that its charge wasn’t acted on by the Planning Board at its October meeting saying the charge was “to look at the issue, not come up with an ordinance,” he said.

Citing “property rights” and undue government intervention — also suggesting the real reason for the ordinance was aesthetics and not public health, safety and welfare — the majority of the board suggested using diplomacy rather than law to take care of abandoned buildings in Highlands.

However, if diplomacy fails, municipalities typically turn to ordinances to ensure due process procedures are followed whose basis is backed by N.C. statutes. “And that’s why the Town Board requested an ordinance,” said Town Planner Joe Cooley.
Western school districts rank high in new ‘parent-friendly’ ratings

Asheville, Buncombe lag behind with C+ grades

Western North Carolina had three of the five highest-ranked public school systems in the John Locke Foundation’s latest assessment of parent-friendly schools. Clay and Cherokee county schools ranked No. 1 and No. 2 among the state’s 115 public districts, while Polk County tied for No. 4.

The news was not as good for some other public school systems in the western part of the state. Asheville and Buncombe County schools earned C+ grades for the second straight year.

Clay and Cherokee earned the only overall grades of B+ in North Carolina. For Clay, this represented a jump from a B grade in 2008. Cherokee maintained a B+ grade, while Polk dropped from a B+ to a B.

Three other western school systems earned full B grades. Rutherford County schools climbed from a B- to a B, while Macon County climbed from a C+ to a B. Henderson County schools made the largest leap, from a C to a B grade. Meanwhile, McDowell County dipped from a B to a B- while Madison County schools jumped from a C to a B+ grade.

Along with Asheville and Buncombe County, Burke and Graham county schools maintained C+ grades for a second straight year. Haywood County schools climbed from a C grade to a C+ Yancey County schools dropped a full letter grade from B to C, while Transylvania County dropped from a C to a C+. Jackson and Mitchell county schools maintained C grades.

The Swain County school system was the only Western North Carolina district to record an overall grade lower than C. Swain dipped from a C in 2008 to a D+ in 2009.

Districts across the state earned more C grades and fewer D’s in the John Locke Foundation’s second-annual assessment of “parent-friendly” schools. That’s a sign of progress to the JLF analyst who graded every district.

“The good news is that the number of overall D grades dropped from 27 school districts to 19 districts this year, while the number of C’s climbed from 64 to 75,” said

Letters to the editor are recommended.
BITUARY

James “Bill” William Webb

James “Bill” William Webb, age 72, of Walhalla, SC died Friday, November 27, 2009 at the Fidelia-Eckerd Living Center in Highlands, N.C.

He was a native of Macon County, son of the late James Floyd and Annie Lee Owens Webb. He retired from J. P. Stephens in Seneca, SC with 37 years of service. He was a member of Mountain Rest Baptist Church.

He is survived by his wife, Reba Talley Webb; two daughters, Karen Anderson and Beverly Webb both of Seneca, SC; a sister Betty Jean Roach of Walhalla, SC; a half-sister, Shelia Owensby of Copperhill, TN; three brothers, George Webb of Lenoir City, TN, John Webb and Floyd Calvin (Curt) Webb both of Clayton, GA. Six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his step-mother Lydia Hembree Webb; brothers, James Edward (Ed) Webb, Homer Webb and three infants; two twin half sisters and one great-grandchild.

Funeral services were held Sunday, November 29, 2009 at 3 pm in the Chapel of Bryant-Grant Funeral Home in Highlands with Rev. Clyde Webb and Rev. Junior Jenkins officiating. Burial was at the Macedonia Baptist Church Cemetery. Pallbearers will be Andrew Picklesimer, Richard Todd, Matt Phillips, Paul Webb, Nelon Talley, Bobby Jenkins and Darrel Talley. Bryant-Grant Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Happy Birthday to Bessie Dryman Barnes

Bessie Dryman Barnes of Scaly Mountain, NC will be 98 years young on Dec. 3, 2009. She was born Dec. 3, 1911 to Ray and Mamie Mcconnell Dryman. She is the oldest and only survivor of seven siblings. She is also the oldest resident in Scaly Mtn., and a veritable wealth of knowledge about Scaly and its history. Her progeny include 10 children, 26 grandchildren, 38 great grandchildren and nine great-great grandchildren.
Croaking can be fun ... read and learn

I know, I know, I've been fixating on death lately but, so what? It's what we geozzers do. I tried to make a bucket list; i.e. those things I want to accomplish before they pass sand in my face and I get moldy cheeks, but I finished it.

I know lots of folks are not going to like reading this. Croaking should be a serious matter but, in my world, it's not. Here's my fun croaking story.

A grandchild climbed into my lap and asked, "Poppy, can you make a noise like a frog?"

"Sure I can," I replied. "But why do you ask?"

"Because Grammy says when you croak, we'll all go to Disney World."

I looked at the bucket like this. Literally millions of people have done this before me, yet I haven't heard one complaint ... not one. That's a good thing.

And don't just love those spooky stories about people who supposedly died, went to the other side, and then were miraculously brought back to life. They saw dead relatives, the mysterious tunnel with the white light at the end. I say horsefeathers. Those people must've been smoking those skinny cigarettes. There's no tunnel ... except in their squirrelly minds.

Write if you've seen a tunnel but only if you're not smoking skinny cigarettes and you're dead. Ponder this: Was Saddam Hussein reincarnated as a urinal cake? I think so.

When God created us, He...or She, God forbid, built this "self preservation" thingy inside us to keep us alive. But God never meant for us to coast into death like blobs. I see so many geozzers doing that. I envy General Custer. That's the way to go, guns blazing and screaming, "Where did all these @%$& Indians come from?"

If you're currently blobbing into death, change your ways and start to live. Please don't die at a bridge tournament. Can you imagine? If you're in "blob" mode, get off your duff and do something wild, even it if kills you. Remember, in less than 100 years, no one will even know you existed. Your kids will squander your entire financial portfolio in less than ninemonths so spend it now before they do. On your deathbed, your last check should bounce.

The li'l missis and I have decided to meet the grim reaper at full speed ahead, sliding into home base, spikes held high as the devil tries desperately to tag us out. That's why we take continuous, exciting and sometimes dangerous trips. Soon, we'll be checking out those scoundrels who highjack ships in the Gulf of Aden. And it's why we hung from dill's teaching rappelling for 13 years. We're driven to live life to its fullest; otherwise we're just hangin' out waiting to croak. BORING! Also, it's why I loved shooting it out with the bad guys for all those years.

I just know there's a special place over in the corner of heaven where He puts policemen. I hope we can bring our spouses when it's their turn. By the way, why don't men bring casseroles when women croak?

And I can't write about dying and not bring up religion. I'm Catholic. For years, I thought Catholics were the only people in heaven. I learned that from Sister Whachamacallit while reading my Catechism in the second grade. Are you sitting down? Now I'm told even Baptists are allowed in. Wow!

My Ma had no religion. She was the kindest, most gentle, hard working lady I ever knew. She never prayed but literally led the good life, wronged no one and never knew. She never prayed but literally led the good life, wronged no one and died peacefully at the age of 92. I never heard her curse or say a cross word to or about anyone. She was a generous, gentle, loving woman who stayed married to my Pa for over 65 years until hedied. I'm sure God won't put her in the same corner with scoundrel cops like me.

I have faced death many times and loved every minute of it. If the odds-makers knew the truth, they would say I shouldn't be alive. Only the li'l missus knows the full story. Now I'm convinced I'll die when scheduled and not before. Until then, my mission is to live the good life and take risks.

Finally, my biggest fear in dying is not being able to write about it. If the odds-makers knew the truth, they would say I shouldn't be alive. Only the li'l missus knows the full story. Now I'm convinced I'll die when scheduled and not before. Until then, my mission is to live the good life and take risks.

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Finally, my biggest fear in dying is possibly learning that eating properly was totally meaningless. Can you imagine? Maybe I could've been eating real butter, greasy steaks, eggs and shrimp every day but I wasn't going to croak until it was my time. Oy!
The definition of ‘food’

The miracle is that they can sell them; Miracle Noodles.
They contain no calories, are devoid of nutritional value. That’s the company’s only promise; that and “boosting soluble fiber intake.” How do you sell food with no calories? Market it in America, silly. Why not shove saw dust into a calorie-free casing, mix in a little sage and fennel, and sell it as sausage? Matter of fact, might make a nice meal, konnyaku into root noodles and red oak saw dust links. There would be a few calories in the red sauce, but the goal is weight loss, not starvation. The noodles are made from root, but so is sweet potato soufflé. The company web site declares its product to be, “guilt free noodles, zero calories, soy free, gluten free.” If that’s not enough, they’re made in America.

I heard about Miracles Noodles from Frank. Frank wouldn’t want to mention his last name. He and his wife are enrolled in the automatic re-order program. They need never run out of noodles and will get first shot when Miracle Noodles introduces mostaccioli. The root noodles are available in several popular pasta types, apparently with more to come. Frank has lost a lot of weight eating noodle root, so I decided it wouldn’t hurt to check out the web site. I’ve been eating a low carb diet, and miss pasta.

I ordered angel hair, and expected the Fed Ex package to be as light as a feather. It weighed 10 pounds. Of course that’s 10 calorie-free pounds, which can fill a lot of empty stomach spaces.

Frank had warned me not to smell the product, which has a distinct fishy order. That was strike one. Still, I never dreamed noodles would be packaged in water. It had to be water because fish had been dying in it. Company information, which I hadn’t bothered to read before placing my order, warned of a fishy odor, but only reassured the customer that they were safe to eat, and should not be returned for a refund.

Disappointments were mounting fast. I expected my “pasta” to arrive dry. In my Italian family, we didn’t put the spaghetti in the water until it was time to cook it. The pouches feel like something you would use at your kid’s Halloween party, between the skinless grapes and mushy bananas. Blindfold the kids and ask them to touch some icky stuff.

Miracle noodles are, if nothing else, versatile. Your guests could be convinced the stuff was brains, or kidney, heart, or any of a number of internal organs. That’s before you take them out of the package. The gory possibilities are endless, especially if you refrain from rinsing them for three to five minutes in warm water, which the company strongly recommends. After thrusting his hand into the noodles, a kid might say, “This is not fettucini. This is dead guy’s guts, and he’s been dead for awhile.”

The smell really is pretty overwhelming, and it seemed to linger, even after a prolonged rinse, the way skunk scent stays on a dog. And it reemerges every time he gets wet.

I rinsed the bag before throwing it in the trash, and then immediately carried the bag to the garage. Lizzie asked that I not use her kitchen scissors to open the pouch. Why would a company pack its product in water that smells like expired sushi? Individual noodles look like albino worms, no offense to albinos.

It’s not easy to isolate a single noodle for examination. They tend to clump. Even after getting past the smell, heating the little devils, and pouring a little red sauce on top, I couldn’t separate them. I learned as a kid that Italians roll their pasta, while all others cut it. To this day I can’t separate them, and pouring a little red sauce, but the goal is weight loss, not starvation. The noodles are made from root, but so is sweet potato soufflé. The company web site declares its product to be, “guilt free noodles, zero calories, soy free, gluten free.” If that’s not enough, they’re made in America.

On Tuesday, Nov. 17, Stephanie McCall was sworn into office by Macon County Clerk of Court Vic Perry. McCall is replacing Frieda Bennett who vacated her position on the Macon County Board of Education in October.

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Highlands' Newspaper - Thursday, Dec. 3, 2009 - Page 5
Last week when describing the principle this country is founded on I wrote “opportunity, equality, and opportunity.” Later I wondered why it was those three words that sprang to mind when I thought of my country, particularly the word “opportunity.”

The Declaration of Independence declares “that among these they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” Some of the Founders wanted to say we are guaranteed the right to “life, liberty, and property,” but they lost.

What does the right to pursue happiness mean except the opportunity to follow your dreams?

It is curious to me that there is so much animus towards France in this country, particularly in the last decade — remember “Freedom Fries”? France overthrew their monarch at the same time we did, the French revolutionaries called for liberty just like the revolutionaries in our country did. But they didn't call for opportunity; they called for “brotherhood.” The French motto is Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité.

Perhaps this plea for equality and brotherhood is why so many Americans hate the French. The two revolutions were in reality fundamentally different. The American revolution was led by successful and wealthy men, property owners who disliked the interference of the British Crown in their business dealings. George Washington, I hearread, was one of the wealthiest landowners in Colonial America. The American revolutionaries really weren't that interested in equality; at the time the Constitution was written only white men who owned property were considered worthy of citizenship.

France's revolution on the other hand, was a class revolution. The peasants overthrew the aristocracy to bring about equality in wealth and citizenship. In fact, post-revolution equality was so extreme it resulted in the anarchy of mob rule.

I thought of this conversation with myself when I saw the abstract of David Brooks' November 24 New York Times column, "The Values Question." It read, "Like all great public issues, the health care debate is fundamentally about values, about whether we have a moral preference for vitality or security.

In the article he wrote: "During the first many decades of this nation's existence, the United States was a wide-open, dynamic country with a rapidly expanding economy. It was also a country that tolerated a large amount of cruelty and pain — poor people living in misery, workers suffering from exploitation. Over the years, Americans decided they wanted a little more safety and security. This is what happened at some point in history, a time when Americans decided that they were going to use money to buy civilization. Reform would make us a little less decadent society, but a less vibrant one. We'll have to decide what we want at this moment in history, vitality or security.

Certainly the United States is a vibrant nation of opportunity and I'd like to keep it that way. However, I have a different idea of what it takes for a nation to create opportunity for all its citizens. I would like our nation to be a meritocracy, where talents and hard work are what make for success, not a family pedigree.

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Certainly the United States is a vibrant nation of opportunity and I'd like to keep it that way. However, I have a different idea of what it takes for a nation to create opportunity for all its citizens. I would like our nation to be a meritocracy, where talents and hard work are what make for success, not a family pedigree.

To provide equal opportunity, we need to provide for basic needs. Among these are quality education and basic health care. Without a healthy body and mind, opportunity to participate in life is decreased.

One of the rallying cries against the health care reform bill is that they will mandate that everyone buy insurance. I don't hear those people arguing against the requirement for all automobile owners to purchase insurance. If you own a car you are mandated to have automobile insurance. In the same way, if you have a body you should be mandated to have body insurance, otherwise known as health insurance.

No one knows when they will need medical care. Accidents and illnesses come out of the blue. Those healthy young people who don't "need" health insurance because statistically they won't get ill are also in the age bracket that is most likely to have an auto accident.

A good friend of mine from high school went sled-ding the day before his twenty-first birthday. Healthy as a horse never ill, his sled slammed into a tree and he was paralyzed from the waist down. He worked extremely hard to get out of that hospital bed and graduated with his class from college. But he could never get medical insurance and his family was burdened with enormous medical bills. His opportunities were forever truncated by his struggle to afford health care.

I just happened to read the introduction to Richard Hofstadter's "American Political Tradition" this week. I was struck by his claim that "however much at odds on specific issues, the major political traditions have shared a belief in the rights of property, the philosophy of economic individualism, the value of competition; they have accepted the economic virtues of capitalist culture as necessary qualities of man... The business of politics is to protect this competitive world, to foster it on occasion, to patch up its incidental abuses, but not to cripple it with a plan for common collective action. American traditions also show a strong bias in favor of equitarian democracy, but it has been a democracy in cupidity [greed] rather than a democracy of fraternity."

This is why France has universal health care and we don't, and probably never will.

All of Katie Brugger's columns are available on her website: www.kathleenbrugger.com
Terry Stoops, JLF Education Policy Analyst, said, “The bad news is that most districts are still earning C’s and D’s. No district earns an overall A grade, and the number of B’s dipped slightly this year from 19 to 17.”

This is the second year that Stoops has assigned each school district a “parent-friendly” grade, so it’s the first time he’s had a chance to note signs of progress or back-pedaling. The Clay County public school system raised its grade this year from B to B+, securing the No. 1 ranking in the state. Cherokee County earned the only other B+, ranking No. 2. Fifteen other districts earned a B or B- while 75 earned some form of C. Nineteen districts earned D grades, while Bertie, Hoke, and Vance counties joined the Weldon City Schools in earning Fs.

Nine school systems improved by a full letter grade since Stoops issued his 2008 report. Henderson County schools tie for the state’s No. 7 ranking after raising their grade from C to B. Durham, Edgecombe, and Warren County public schools joined the Thomasville City Schools in improving from F to D in the past year.

Meanwhile, marks for six school systems dropped by a full letter grade. Catawba, Carteret, and Yancey counties all dropped from B grades to C’s, while Hoke and Bertie dropped from D’s to Fs.

With no threat of losing clientele to competitors, many schools and school districts believe they are like the monopolies they are,” Stoops said. “These school districts focus on strengthening the organization’s position and goals, rather than meeting the needs of their clientele. One need not look further than the low regard that many teachers and administrators have toward parents to find evidence of this organizational-first mentality.”

As in 2008, Stoops found differences in district-to-district comparisons based on geography and school district size. “School districts in western North Carolina generally fared well in the ‘parent-friendly’ rankings, with seven of the top 10 districts being located in the west,” he said. “In contrast, districts in the Triad, Triangle, Charlotte, and northeastern North Carolina tended to fare poorly.”

“In general, smaller school districts proved to be more parent-friendly than larger school districts,” Stoops added. “Most of the top-performing school districts enrolled fewer than 10,000 students.”

The rankings are based on 11 different measures in the four categories of school administration, teachers, safety, and performance. The measures include end-of-grade reading and math scores, four-year graduation rates, and school crime statistics. Also included are statistics linked to teacher turnover and teaching vacancies, the percentage of each school system’s staff devoted to jobs outside of classroom teaching, and results of a Teacher Working Conditions survey.

Stoops converted the numbers into letter grades. He assigned each school district four individual-category letter grades and an average final grade. “This report develops a system that is designed to show the extent to which North Carolina’s school districts provide children a sound, basic education in a stable and safe environment that is responsive to the needs of children and concerns of parents.”

Further research could help school leaders learn more about the steps they can take to become more parent-friendly, Stoops said. “We need to know more before we can pinpoint the combination of factors that contribute to success, but the school districts that fared well in this ranking were generally small districts with stable, high-performing teaching staffs.”

School districts should focus attention on their parent-friendly rankings, Stoops said. “It would be easy for teachers, administrators, and staff to believe the schools belong to them,” he said. “Ratings for parent-friendly schools shift the attention back to the families the schools were designed to serve.”

Terry Stoops’ Spotlight report “Parent-Friendly Schools, 2009: How ‘Parent-Friendly’ are school districts in North Carolina?” is available at the JLF Web site. For more information, please contact Stoops at (919) 828-3876 or tstoops@johnlocke.org. To arrange an interview, contact Mitch Kokai at (919) 306-8736 or mkokai@johnlocke.org.

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Despite early problems offensively, the Highlanders split a pair with Hayesville on Friday night as they celebrate Homecoming. Come out and support your Highlanders!

By Ryan Potts

The Highlands Highlanders and Lady Highlanders hosted the Hayesville Yellow Jackets on Tuesday evening.

The Lady Highlanders began the evening looking to be aggressive and set the tone early with full court pressure. While the Lady Highlanders had no trouble forcing turnovers early in the contest, they struggled on offense, only scoring 6 points in the first quarter. The second quarter brought better offensive flow, as the Lady Highlanders outscored the Lady Jackets 15-7 to take a lead that they would not relinquish. Emily Munger led Highlands with 15 points and Marlee McCall added 9.

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The Highlanders will host Cherokee on Saturdays 10-2526-5208

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The Girls JV/Varsity team: Kalyn Billingsley, Juliane Buras, Taylor Buras, Jenny Coram, Jessica Gagne, Manager Elizabeth Gordon, Abigail Hewins, Rebecca Johnson, Susan Johnson, Marlee McCall, Emily Munger, Emily Murphy, Kate-Marie Parks, Sarah Power, Courtney Rogers, Brie Schmitt, Karoline Shomaker, Stephanie Smart, Manager Bobbi Jo Talley, and Mary Warner. The head Coach is Brett Lamb and Assistant Coaches are George Schmitt and Stephanie Smathers.

It’s Homecoming Week at Highlands School! A Pep Rally is Friday, Dec. 4 at 2 p.m.; the Homecoming basketball game against Cherokee is Friday, Dec. 4 at 6:30 p.m. and the presentation of Homecoming Court will take place between Varsity Girls’ and Boys’ Games.

Photos by Kim Lewicki
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**His & Hers**

Greek to me

By Michelle A. Mead-Armor

Linguistically speaking, I’ve been pretty lucky up to now. Raised in the USA, with a French mother, I grew up speaking two languages: Living in New York City for 12 years, with the nicest doorman anyone could hope for, I picked up working knowledge of Spanish. My six years in a German bank – which provided us with German language lessons, if we so desired – gave me ein bischen of German, too.

But Greek? Well, it’s Greek to me! Not only do you have to deal with a completely new language, you also have to deal with a new alphabet. Now I know how it feels to be in a country where you don’t have a clue what people are saying, seeing road signs and shop signs you don’t understand. It’s unsettling, to say the least.

Fortunately, the patience and kindness of the Greek people we meet – and their steadfast determination to help us out by trying to speak English – keeps the trip from becoming a disaster.

Arrivadero, Italy! Yasu, Greece! Our destination is Katakolon. Once off the ship, we divide up into tours and board the buses for our chosen excursions. Our guide for the day is Katie, a delightful young lady with a ready smile and flashing eyes.

Fortunately for us, she is also very knowledgeable, and has a way of explaining that is neither boring nor patronizing. The drive through the Greek countryside is a treat for the eyes – more olive trees, as in Italy, but this time, mile after mile of oleander, as well.

We note little chapels, the size of mailboxes, alongside the road, and find out that they are the equivalent of our roadside crosses put up at the scene of traffic fatalities. Other features we don’t recognize are the metal tanks on the roofs of many houses (which turn out to be solar water heaters) and crow-like metal “birds” perched on the chimneys (which direct the smoke away from houses when strong winds blow.) This may be an ancient land, but Greece has embraced its share of modern technology.

Our main destination is Olympia, the site of the original Olympic Games. Since tourism is a major part of Greece’s economy, the site has clear signage and maps. Katie explains the origin of the Olympic Games, and we realize that there is a lot we don’t know. For one thing, most of the competitors were ordinary people, not professional athletes. Another fact which becomes very obvious is that there are few places which don’t show major devastation, mostly the result of earthquakes, so frequent in this part of the world. One of the ladies in our group turns to me, and says “Are these ruins?” I resist the temptation to reply, “No, M’am, it’s a building site. They’re putting in a McDonalds.”

We see the ruins of the temple of this god; the ruins of the temple of that god. Over here is where the athletes trained; over there a sort of spa/gym building. It’s a massive complex, showing how seriously the Greeks felt about the role of physical activity in everyday life. Over and over we see bare blocks of stone which were originally topped by statues of Olympic champions – statues which now adorn museums all over the world. Katie tells us how much of Greece’s cultural heritage is no longer found Greece, due to centuries of conquest and pillage.

Every time you visit the Louvre in Paris, or the British Museum in London, just remember where these masterpieces come from and where many Greeks feel they still belong.

The most popular site is perhaps the least impressive – the starting line for races in the Olympic Games. Tourists vie to have their pictures taken on the starting line, poised to burst into action at any second. We are informed that the Olympic competitors competed in the nude, which causes great hilarity among our group. In fact, no women were allowed among the competitors or the audience at the Games. The only exception was a lone priestess – who was blind (or so she said!). Women had their own separate group. In fact, no women were allowed among the competitors or the audience at the Games.

Much is made of the whole concept of amateurism in the Olympics, but this is a relatively modern concept. In ancient times, each winner was awarded a symbolic Zeus olive wreath, and allowed to erect a victory statue of himself at Olympia. More than that, however, the victors often returned home, receiving free meals and sometimes even free housing, for life. Some towns even tore down their • See HIS & Hers page 11
On Monday, Nov. 16 a crew from the Macon County maintenance department arrived at the Hudson Library to start the renovation of the building. The former Bascom gallery is where the first work is being done, so the impact on library users will be minimal during this phase of the renovation.

The front room, which was formerly the main Bascom gallery space, will be an Adult Reading area with book shelves and comfortable reading chairs. Also, windows which have been completely covered up on the side wall will be opened so there will be natural light in this room. The middle room will be a new Children's Room, and the back room, which was formerly the Bascom office space, will be a community meeting room. This room will be available for groups to use in the evening when the library is closed, and will have kitchen facilities.

This project is called an "interim" renovation because the Hudson Library Board of Trustees' long-range plan includes an expansion of the library facility in this same location sometime in the next five years. The work being done during this interim phase has been designed to fit with the needs of the future expansion.

If you have any questions about the interim renovation, please call the Hudson Library at 526-3031. There are architect's drawings available for view at the library so you can see the floor plans and renderings of the finished rooms.

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**Use Highlands’ Newspaper to get the word out!**

It's on the streets and on the web every Thursday. Call 526-0782

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**HCCMF Presents...**

"Christmas Chamber Music with Santa"

Saturday, December 12th

at 5PM

Performing Arts Center - Highlands

Kate Ransom  
David Hancock  
William Ransom

performing Christmas Music for violin, cello, piano and...

a fun Christmas Carol sing-along

Santa will hand out treats for good listeners!

Children under 12 are free; Adult tickets $20

Call HCCMF at 828-526-9060 for ticket information
... LETTERS from page 2

Fort Hood shootings without any shout outs, awarding of “props,” or even a single fist bump. Why is it that the establishment media and the administration has fallen all over themselves to avoid the words terrorist or Muslim when talking about Fort Hood? I am not suggesting Obama flail his hands in the air and scream, “the terrorists are coming!” but I am asking that he must as much indignation and passion when describing someone who killed or injured a few dozen Americans as he did about Fox News.

The only times that Islamic terrorism was hinted at the elites were breathlessly assuring us that this act was an aberration of Islam. That nothing in the Islamic faith would encourage such behavior. Why is it that Nancy Pelosi teared up, or at least she would have if her tear ducts were still operational, when warning of how the rhetoric of the tea party goers could contribute to an environment of violence, even though there hasn’t been any to speak of, but every attack from a subscriber to the “religion of peace” is an anomaly?

Chris Matthews questioned whether it was illegal to contact someone in Al Qaeda. While I can’t say if Hasan broke any laws in contacting Al Qaeda, I can say that it was in extremely poor taste. To put it into terms that liberals can understand ... contacting an organization that preaches hatred of America and her ideals, Al Qaeda not the ACLU, is almost as distasteful as not aborting a child with Down syndrome.

I am sure by now that we have all heard about the upcoming civil trials for the handful of terrorists that are going to be brought to New York. Personally, I think that this is a foolish decision and reveals a regression to the pre 9/11 mind set of treating terrorist acts as a police action. Never mind that the trials will be well publicized circuses, but they could be detrimental to national security.

Why is it that liberals get misty when talking about a terrorist’s supposed constitutional rights yet they forget all about that document when it comes to our own citizens’ rights to own and bear arms, right to free speech etc...? I keep looking for Michael Moore to come out with The Hairy-Backed Man in the Striped Pajamas, the harrowing untold story of Kaleed Sheikh Mohammed.

But alas, I guess I will never be able to plumb the shallow waters of the labyrinth that is the mind of a liberal. It is a mystery that will never be answered.

Finding a liberal in Washington capable of deductive reasoning and logic is like finding Big Foot. There will be the occasional rumors of sightings or every now and then a grainy video might surface as evidence of their existence, but there may never be any conclusive proof.

Waylon Chastain
Highlands

Oyster Roast ‘tradition’ started

Dear Editor,

The Oyster Roast benefiting the Highlands and Cashiers-Glenville Fire Departments and Rescue Squads was a great success attended by many and enjoyed by all. Hopefully, a new tradition has begun - these brave men can never be thanked enough!

Many thanks to all the generous donors: Carolina Smokehouse, Lett Holly do the cooking, Lisa Dickey - Jennings Supply, Lee Hodge, Shannon Renfro, Cynthia Stain, Fat Gai’s Bakery - Cashiers, Flipside Bar & Grill, Phyllis-Obenshain, The Pizza Place, Brick Oven, Ali Sadaat, Lenny Metrick, Highlands, Hill Deli, Highlands Wine & Cheese, Dusty’s Superette, Kilwins, Revere’s Hardware, Cyprus Restaurant, and a very special thanks to Derek Bynum, Craig McColl, and Matthew Perkins - all of whom gave countless hours of their valuable time to help bring it all together.

Neel Atherton and Gray Alexander
Highlands

Community turnout appreciated

Dear Editor,

Gary, Lena & Dusty Raby would like to thank all the Highlands family and friends who helped with our benefit. The outpouring of kindness was overwhelming. We are very fortunate to be a part of such a great community. So again we want to thank you one and all.

Shuler Announces Grants for Macon County Airport

Congressman Heath Shuler announced federal grants totaling more than $2 million to improve the Macon County Airport.

The grant, issued through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), will provide $2.2 million to extend the airport’s runway and taxiway. The expansion to a 5,000-foot runway would meet additional FAA safety requirements and allow small jets to utilize the airport.

“The Macon County Airport plays an important role in the local economy and serves as a vital link for emergency responders,” said Congressman Shuler, D-Waynesville. “I will continue to work to help the airport grow and prosper.”
Ongoing and Upcoming Events

Ongoing
• Republican women from Jackson, Macon and Transylvania Counties have initiated the formation of a Republican Women's Association. The core group of organizers headed by Melissa McKinnon has established a weekly newsletter. For more information please call 828 200-0437.

Week Long
• The 2010 Highlands Historical Society calendars are available at Cyrano's, The Highlander Newspaper, Country Club Properties (Wright Square location), and The Chambers Agency. All proceeds benefit the Highlands Historical Society.
• At Health Tracks at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, various exercise classes. Call 828-526-1FIT.

Sundays
• Refuge Youth meets every Sun. night at 6:30 p.m. downstairs at Cullasaja Assembly of God. Call youth ministers Matt and Candace Woodroof at 828-369-7540 ext. 203.
• Yoga On the Mat at the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation on Main Street. Enter through single door facing Mountain Fresh. MW @ 7:30 a.m., Thur. @ 10:45 a.m. Bring your mat. 828-482-2128.
• Men's interdenominational Bible Study at 8:30 a.m. at First Baptist Church.
• Study sessions at the Universal Unitarian Fellowship Hall in Franklin. A $5 soup-supper will be served at 5:30 p.m. Study sessions will begin at 6:30 p.m. For more information call 828-524-6777 or 706-877-6618. $30/mth.

First Presbyterian to hold annual carol sing after parade

There will be a Christmas Carol Sing at First Presbyterian Church at 2 p.m. on Saturday, December 5, after the parade. If you enjoy singing familiar Christmas carols, you won't want to miss this! Steil Huie will be song leader.

Special guests will be The Highlands Male Chorus, led by Orville Wike, and Bagpiper David Landis who will join Angel Jenkins at the pipe organ in a rousing rendition of "O Come All Ye Faithful."

Make plans to attend for an enjoyable hour of singing and Christian fellowship. Everyone is cordially invited to attend.

The church is located at 471 Main Street. Handicap entrances are located on 5th Street and on Church Street.

Expanded H1N1 Flu Clinics scheduled

The Macon County Public Health Center has scheduled several H1N1 flu vaccination clinics. The clinics are by appointment only and clinic times and locations may be obtained when calling 349-2081 to schedule an appointment. H1N1 flu vaccination clinic is scheduled for Friday, Dec. 4 for the following priority groups:

Anyone under 49 years old
Any person (regardless of age) with the following chronic medical conditions:
• Asthma
• Chronic lung disease
• Heart disease
• Blood disorder
• Diabetes
• Kidney disorder
• Liver disorder
• Metabolic disorder
• Weakened immune system
• Neurological disorders

Please call the public health center at 349-2081 for H1N1 flu vaccination clinic appointments.

Also, if you are interested in receiving a seasonal flu vaccination, please call the public health center at 349-2081 for more information on availability. The public is encouraged to use the Macon County Public Health Center’s flu information and appointment line to keep up-to-date on flu vaccination clinics and the latest eligibility criteria. This line may be accessed by calling 349-2081 and following the flu information instructions.

Alternative Giving Christmas at Highlands Methodist Church this year Sat., Dec. 5 after the parade

Alternative Giving Christmas, right after the Christmas Parade at the Highlands United Methodist Church. Free lunch and visit booths to see what the local non-profit agencies are doing in our community. There will be information on how you may purchase a gift that will benefit those who have much less.

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Thursday, Dec. 3, 2009
**Enchanted Forest** youth art exhibition continues at The Bascom

**A young artist checks out the new exhibition of children's art, "Enchanted Forest," at The Bascom. The exhibition showcases work done during the fall by the kindergarten through eighth graders who take weekly classes at the nonprofit art center. The exhibition continues through Dec. 18 in the ground-floor Children's Gallery. Admission is free. For more information about all Bascom youth art classes, visit www.thebascom.org or call (828) 526-4949 ext. 100.**

The Historical Society is selling fresh-cut Fraser fir Christmas trees this year. 6'-7' trees are $55 each, and 8'-9' trees are $70. Place orders now by leaving a message at 787-1050. Trees that have been ordered may be picked up at the Historic Village next to the Rec Park on North Fourth Street on December 4 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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**Historic Society's Christmas Showhouse to be a show-stopper!**

As this year's Christmas Showhouse, the Highlands Historical Society has made arrangements for Highlanders and their visitors to tour one of the Town's most historic houses: the Stewart House, ca. 1890, located at 425 Brock Court off Hickory Street across from the ball field.

The ten-room house will be filled with beautiful baubles, fresh fragrant greenery, gorgeous handmade quilts and ideas to copy in celebrating the season. Something new has been added to this year's Showhouse: the sale of many of the decorative items, the quilts, garlands, wreaths and boughs, 2010 calendars, and chances to win a set of six art glass plates from Bryant Art Glass.

Raffle tickets are $1 each or six for $5. Admission to the Showhouse is $15 with shuttles from the Community Building. Proceeds from the Showhouse benefit the Historical Society's preservation of the Prince House, ca. 1877, the Historical Museum and Archives housed in the original Hudson Library building, ca. 1915, and one of Dr. Mary Lapham's 60 cottages for TB patients, ca. 1908.
Ongoing and Upcoming Events

Plein air artists enjoy fall weather at The Bascom

Highlands’ crisp but clear fall weather has been attracting a host of open air, or plein air, artists to The Bascom lately. Highlands School art students, like this student above left, made a morning trip to sketch some of the landscape, while several painters from the Georgia Landmark Art Project, including this artist, above right, traveled to Highlands to paint the art center’s historical buildings. The Bascom welcomes plein air artists and will be hosting a Plein Air Paint Out weekend in September 2010 in conjunction with the International Plein Air Painters. For more information about The Bascom and its offerings, call (828) 526-4949 or visit www.thebascom.org (2010 programming will be available after the first of the year). The Bascom exhibitions and shop are open through Dec. 18. Educational programs run all year.

Literacy Council announces ‘Great Literacy Challenge’

The Literacy Council of Highlands has been awarded a $10,000 challenge grant by the Hayes Family Foundation of Jacksonville Beach, Fla., to maintain the position of programs coordinator.

“In order to keep the position of programs coordinator, we needed to meet the Great Literacy Challenge by raising $10,000 by the end of the year,” said Bessie Dietrich Goggins, executive director of the Literacy Council. To date, the Literacy Council has raised a little more than half of the funds and needs help to meet the challenge,” said Goggins.

“Laura Miller is the council’s programs coordinator, and besides working with the children, she does a fantastic job coordinating schedules and goals among the students, parents, tutors and school,” Goggins said.

Others in the community agree that Miller fills a need within the Literacy Council. “Laura has a wonderful presence with the children who attend the Literacy Council’s programs,” said chemistry tutor Jodie Cook, local community leader. “She’s just like a pied piper with the children. It is just amazing.”

The funds raised from this campaign will allow the programs coordinator to continue as a full-time staff member for the Literacy Council, which offers seven ongoing programs throughout the year. “Laura fills a critical need because the Literacy Council needs to continually spread the word to children and parents about our free programs, as well as consistently recruit tutors,” said council president Marjorie Fielding.

The programs coordinator is an essential position to help the Literacy Council meet the needs of the community, said Goggins. “Laura helps us keep a pulse on what our programs’ participants need to continue their educations and develop a love for literacy,” Goggins said. “She helps us fulfill our mission to enrich lives through literacy on the Highlands plateau.”

The Literacy Council asks that anyone who would like to donate to the Great Literacy Challenge can contact Goggins via e-mail at highlands literacy@juno.com or by telephone at (828) 526-9938.
Chamber music Christmas program featuring the 'best of the best' for the holidays!

Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival offers a beautiful gift to the twin communities with its Christmas Program, slated for 5 p.m. Saturday, December 12th, at the Martin-Lipscomb Performing Arts Center in Highlands.

The performance features gorgeous Christmas music performed by violinist Kate Ransom, cellist David Hancock and pianist William Ransom. This program for audiences of all ages, Santa will be on hand to comment on the music and to hand out treats to good listeners. Vivaldi’s “Winter” from his ever-popular “Four Seasons,” Tchaikovsky’s “Noel” from his own “Seasons,” some Chopin for solo piano, Christmas Carol Suite and another singing along of Christmas songs will make this a perfect prelude to the holidays.

This unabashedly festive program is $20 for adults, and children under 12 are free. For more information or tickets, call (828) 526-9060.

An internationally-recognized chamber musician and recitalist who’s a favorite of Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival audiences for her passionate performances, Kate Ransom is currently violinist with the Sarafin String Quartet. She was a founder of the Alexander String Quartet and has chamber auditions in several of the best known music concert halls around the world.

David Hancock came to Atlanta in 1991, as cellist with the Atlanta Chamber Players. Since 1993, David is the Principal Cellist of the Nashville Chamber Orchestra (recently renamed Orchestra Nashville), a group committed to programming new “cross-over” works in concert with traditional masterpieces. He is soloist on the group’s debut compact disc, "Conversations in Silence". David earned the Master of Music degree in conducting from Southwestern Theological Seminary in Texas. His extensive study of solo and chamber repertoire replaced him under the coaching of Lynn Harrell, Claus Adam, Leonard Rose and Samuel Mays. David received the Bachelor of Music degree from Indiana University, where he studied with Fritz Magg. Since coming to Atlanta, David frequently performs in the southeast as soloist, and as a chamber musician where he also serves as pedagogue, composer and arranger. He recorded as soloist and chamber musician on several CD recordings and has also recorded with Trey Anastasio, Steve Green, Michael W. Smith, Amy Grant and others. In 2005 he founded the Elysum Chamber Orchestra and Chorus and serves as its Artistic Co-Director. David is the co-founder of Chamber Music Atlanta.

Pianist William Ransom, who serves as artistic director of the Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival, has appeared in recital, as soloist with orchestras, and as a chamber musician in Eastern and Western Europe, Japan, Korea, South America, Mexico, and throughout the United States. He has performed in New York’s Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Town Hall, and Merkin Hall; in Orchestra Halls in Chicago, Detroit, and Atlanta; at the National Gallery in Washington D.C.; and in Philadelphia, Boston, Miami, Dallas, and Los Angeles. He has performed for the American Ambassador to Japan and Ireland, and his performances have been broadcast on National Public Radio and Television in the United States, Japan, Korea, Argentina, and Poland. His recording of “Enoch Arden,” by Richard Strauss, “The Music of Alfredo Barili,” and “Chamber Music of Johannes Brahms” were released on the ACA label. Ransom can also be heard on “Heartkeys,” from Rising Star Records.

Sheriff Department asks community for monetary donations for annual ‘Shop with a Cop’ program

It’s that time of the year again when the Sheriff’s Office are preparing for its annual “Shop With a Cop” and as always the department is asking the communities to help.

Thanks to monetary donations from the community, officers can pick up local children at their homes and take them Christmas shopping at Wal-Mart. Afterward they have lunch with the officer compliments of Burger King and Wendy’s. The officer and his new little friend then go back to the Sheriff’s Office Police Department and wrap their Christmas gifts.

As always the only requirement is that before the child finishes shopping they must buy one small gift for anyone the child wishes to buy one for. This year’s event will include officers from the Macon County Sheriff’s Office, Franklin Police Department, Highlands Police Department, NC Highway Patrol, NC Wildlife Commission, United States Forest Service, and the NC State Bureau of Investigations.

“T h i s year we hope to bring big smiles to more Macon County children than ever before,” said Sheriff Robert L. Holland. This annual event is always special time and the officers always look forward to participating. With your contribution you can make this year’s event a huge success and help give a family a Christmas they’ll remember for years to come.”

Please send checks by Dec. 14th to: Macon County Sheriff’s Office 1820 Lakeside Drive Franklin, NC 28734

Please make checks payable to: MCSO “Shop with a Cop”
**Spiritually Speaking**

‘Tidings of Comfort and Joy’

Chaplain Margaret Howell
Holy Family Lutheran Church

Last night I helped put one of my seminary classmates who was holding a Service of Lament for her congregation. It seems odd, yes, to have such a service in this season ... or maybe not.

The assemblage was modest — about 10 people, but as we made our way through prayer, song, communion and sharing, I realized that all of us, if we live long enough, accumulate and carry our sorrows with us, sometimes for our entire lives.

The woman whose parents were all gone, who now found herself the matriarch of her family, but longed for someone to mother her.

The victims of abuse and incest, for whom holidays meant not just a gathering of family, but of predators as well. And most of us, who had lost friends and family, sometimes many years ago, but whose memory they still hold dear.

The manufactured joy of the season often brings these losses to weigh heavily on our hearts.

Yet, even in the anticipation of the joyful birth, the words of Handel’s “Messiah” haunt me:

“He was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief.”

Except at Easter, we don’t often think of Jesus in those terms, yet from the moment he was born, he carried all the joys and cares, sorrows and griefs that every human drags along with them. Not only that, but he took upon himself OUR sorrows, OUR griefs!

Quite a burden to heap on a newborn.

For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth (John 18:37 b)

The truth of course, is that Christ came to love us, to walk with us on our journey on earth, to help us carry our burdens, and finally, to take all those burdens himself, so we might be free of them forever.

“Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.”

“For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 44:4)

“Every valley shall be raised up, and every mountain and hill made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.” (Isaiah 40:1, 4)

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

May the comfort of the love of God sustain you all.

Amen.

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**Places of Worship**

**BLUE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH**
Rev. Oliver Rice, Pastor (706) 782-3965
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
Sunday 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
Chapel of Sky Valley
Sky Valley, GA
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) 369-8329
Rai Cammack, Branch President, (828) 369-1627

**CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH**
Father Jim Murphy: Office – 526-2320
Sunday: Holy Communion – 11 a.m.
Highlands Community Center
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
Prayer – 6:30 p.m.
Evening Service – 1st & 3rd Sunday – 7 p.m.

**COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH**
www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685
Pastor Gary Hewins
3645 U.S. 64 east, Highlands
Sundays: 9:30am Sunday School; 10:30 am
Children’s/Family Program; 10:45 Worship

**EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION**
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 RM: Education for Ministry
Wednesday: 6:30 RM. 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**
Dr. Lee Bowman, Pastor
Dr. Don Mullen, Parish Associate 526-3175
Mondays: 8 a.m. - Men’s Bible Discussion & Breakfast
Wednesdays - Choir – 7

**HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD**
Sixth Street
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study – 7

**HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**
Pastor Paul Christy
526-3376
Sun.: school 9:45 a.m.; Worship 11 a.m.; 5 p.m.
Youth Group
Wed: Supper; 6:7:15 – children, youth, & adults studies; 6:15 - Adult choir
(nursery provided for Wed. p.m. activities)
Thurs:12:30 - Women's Bible Study (nursery)

**HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH - ELCA**
Chaplain Margaret Howell
2152 Dillard Road – 526-9741
Sundays: Sunday School and Adult discussion group 9:30 a.m.; Worship/Communion: 10:30
HEALING SERVICE on the 5th Sunday of the month.

**MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH**
8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in Satolah
Pastor Matt Shuler, (828) 526-8425
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
828-369-9270 or 828-293-5197

**OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**
Rev. Dean Cesa, pastor
Parish office, 526-2418
Sundays: Mass – 11 a.m.

**SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH**
Rev. Clifford Willis
Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 11 a.m. & 7 p.m.

**SCALY 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.

**SHORTSFIELD BAPTIST CHURCH**
Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer.
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m.
Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg. – 7 p.m.

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP**
85 Sierra Drive • 828-524-6777
Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.
Child Care - 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Religious Education - 11 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
Youth from 8th - 12th grades meet the second Sunday of each month from 5 - 7:30 p.m.

**WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
Cashiers, Rev. Sam Forrester, 743-2122
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m.
from the history guy ...

Dec. 3

The USS Alfred became the first vessel to fly the Grand Union Flag (the precursor to the Stars and Stripes) the flag is hoisted by John Paul Jones.

Before we had the Stars and Stripes we had some flags of different types, one was designed, made and when it was raised, it became this ship's pennant.

Oh, did I forget to mention that was our official navy ensign?

It was to represent our Union, Jack, 'cause to the Empire, we'd not go back.

But it sort of looked, well, a little bit-ish, a lot like the one used by the British.

So, we had a flag, how 'bout a constitution to recite?

That, they had not begun to write.

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Circle one: In Honor of In Memory of

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Quick thoughts from one of the busiest weekends in sports history

Some unbelievable stories from this weekend, but let's start with Charlie Weis being out at Notre Dame.

The fine folks in South Bend need to face the facts ... Notre Dame is not an elite job anymore. Despite having some big-time talent at QB and WR respectively, Notre Dame cannot compete with the depth and speed of southern schools overall, which is precisely why they need a guy like Brian Kelly to take over that program.

Speaking of coaches on their way out ... Bobby Bowden, I salute you. Despite my longtime hatred of you due to being the architect of the Crimino...er, Seminole dynasty, you have always been a worthy adversary. I have actually felt great sadness in recent years, as Bowden has been reduced to a harmless senior citizen, the kind whom you let cut in front of you at Cracker Barrel or forgive when they bring 17 items to the 10 items or less checkout. Dadgummit Bobby, I hope you have a great retirement-you will be missed.

Tim Tebow played his last home game this Saturday in a rout of Bowden's Seminoles--only two more games until fans around the country can breathe a sigh of relief.

I'm still not sold on Tebow as an NFL QB (although Vince Young's success provides a decent blueprint) but there is no doubt that he is in the pantheon of greatness at the college level. We'll see this weekend if Nick Saban's defense has something cooked up for Superman.

The Big 10 -- ACC challenge wraps up tonight (Wednesday) could this be the year that the ACC goes down? The Clemson-Illinois game could be the deciding game tonight.

The New Orleans Saints and Indianapolis Colts both remain unbeaten in the NFL. This week the Saints were dominant on Monday Night Football, destroying the Patriots in the Superdome. However, Indianapolis may have the upper hand in that they almost have home field advantage locked up throughout the playoffs, whereas the Saints remain just a game in front of 10-1 Minnesota in the NFC.

And finally, Tiger Woods ... whoa. Whether the allegations are true or not, the fact that there have been allegations are surprising enough. We really have no precedent for something like this. Everyone who knows Michael Jordan knew what kind of person he was, but Tiger supposedly cheating on his wife seems much more shocking because of who we thought he was.

It's not the end of the world if it's true, but it just serves as that much more of a reminder that no one is above temptation when put in the wrong position.

---

Ryan Potts

tryanpotts@hotmail.com
or David Wilkes suggested the formation of a Business Advisory Committee whose purpose will be to act as a liaison between the business community and the Town Board.

“Hopefully, members of the committee will be within a block of anyone who needs them, concerning any issue that is affecting them,” said Wilkes. “Whether they want to talk about loose bricks on the sidewalk, parking, zoning or anything else, there will be a committee member nearby who can take the issue to the Town Manager who will in turn take it to the Town Board if necessary, but in any case, action can be taken in a timely manner.”

Commissioner Amy Patterson said the idea was a good one, especially since people are more apt to talk to peers rather than the Town Board, but she didn’t want this to become another layer of bureaucracy.

“I don’t want this to become a committee of people who have to go through, but it would be good for people to have an insulator spokesperson so they don’t have to be articulate in front of the Town Board if they don’t want to.”

Magistrate Pat Taylor conducted the swearing in ceremonies Wednesday night when Commissioners Amy Patterson and Gary Drake and Mayor Dave Wilkes took office. Below, Commissioner Patterson presented Don Mullen and Hank Ross with plaques of appreciation and past mayors Mullen and Buck Trott presented Ross with a proclamation outlining his many services to the town over the last eight years.

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**POLICE & FIRE REPORTS**

The following are the Highlands Police Dept. log entries from Nov. 17. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor, or public officials have been used.

Nov. 17
• At 1:10 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident at 2nd Street and U.S. 64 west.
• At 1:33 p.m., officers responded to a call of a dog tied to Loafer’s Bench. They weren’t able to locate the owner who had left him there while shopping in town.

Nov. 18
• At 5:15 p.m., officers took a report of a wallet stolen from an unlocked vehicle parked in Highlands Plaza.

Nov. 20
• At 4:30 p.m., officers took a report of a cell phone valued at $100 stolen from an unlocked vehicle parked on 2nd Street and Helen’s Barn Ave.
• At 1:25 a.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on N.C. 106 at the entrance of Highlands Decorating Center where the driver was cited for causing an accident while driving under the influence. Arrested was Lindsay Elizabeth Shuler, 21, of Franklin for DWI and careless and reckless driving. She was released on an unsecured $1,000 bond.

Nov. 23
• At 5 p.m., officers responded to a call for service concerning a 12-year-old boy who was riding his bike on U.S. 64. He was escorted to his home on Laurel Street.

Nov. 24
• At 11:25 a.m., officers responded to a call of a suspicious vehicle parked at a home that was unoccupied. The owner of the vehicle said he parked there to be out of the way of construction traffic in the area.

Nov. 25
• At 2:30 p.m., officers were called to a residence on Satulah Road concerning domestic disturbance between two brothers.

Nov. 26
• At 10:10 p.m., officers responded to a call of suspicious vehicle parked on Wilson Road near Harris Lake. The driver was just parked and talking on his phone.

The following are the Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries from Nov 19:

Nov. 19
• At 6:46 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Hicks Road involving a 56-year old man. He was transported to the hospital.

Nov. 20
• At 11:08 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at Wachovia Bank where a woman had fallen and hit her head. There was no transport.

Nov. 21
• At 5:23 a.m., the dept. was first-responders...
Though Cooley supplied the board with the Morrisville, NC, “Abandoned Structure” ordinance to use as a template a few meetings ago, most members had not read it on the basis that they don’t think such an ordinance is needed.

“We were told to look and see if we thought such an ordinance was necessary and we don’t,” said Ricky Bryson. “The Realtors who are saying eyesores are the reason they can’t sell property are just not telling the truth.”

The subject of abandoned buildings was brought to the Town Board’s attention a few months ago by Realtors who said the uninhabited yellow house on U.S. 64 east and the old Northland Cable building now owned by the Old Edwards Group on NC 106 — both of which are in serious disrepair — are eyesores on Highlands corridors.

Though the ordinance wouldn’t be about aesthetics, member Pat Taylor said that “usually when a structure is abandoned and in disrepair appearance is an issue.”

Cooley said the owner of the yellow house is slowing dismantling the structure and OEI put plans to convert the old Northland Cable building into employee housing on the back burner due to the economy, but they are aware of the community’s concerns.

Member Pat Taylor made two separate motions to have Cooley design an ordinance using Morrisville’s as a template and returning it to the Planning Board at its January meeting. Both motions, which varied slightly, failed 4 to 2 with Taylor and Linda Clark voting for them.

Ricky Bryson, Mike Bryson, Griffin Bell and John Underwood voted against the motions. Thomas Craig was absent.

“I can think of lots of reasons why you want an ordinance dealing with abandoned structures,” said Clark. “If it isn’t being lived in and there is a hole in the floor, for instance, there should be a procedure so something can be done before something bad happens like a child wandering in and falling through and getting hurt.”

Members against the ordinance were stuck on the misguided notion that the town’s code enforcement office could inspect buildings in town — whether abandoned or not — and suggest changes, repairs or demolition.

Even after Cooley reiterated the facts—that acting on the ordinance had to be complaint driven, in fact required five complaints from five different people; that it only dealt with abandoned, uninhabitable buildings; and that it was about repairs not demolition — the majority of the board was unmoved.

Taylor, who is also the Highlands Magistrate, said an ordinance is a document that ensures due process by law and would only be used if diplomacy failed.

Cooley said demolition of a building is the absolute last resort. “The point of this is repair and human safety,” he said.

With the Planning Board unwilling to move on the ordinance, Cooley said he will await direction from the Town Board. He said even without the Planning Board’s backing it’s likely he will be asked to draft something.

The procedure for amending the town’s ordinance code typically involves suggestions from the Planning Board but the Town Board always has the last say.

When the issue of amending Highlands’ Zoning Ordinance comes up — whether it involves tweaking a portion already on the books, or incorporating a new segment — the Town Board always asks the Planning Board to take the first look — a procedure grounded in NC Statute.

Regardless of the Planning Board’s suggestion, however, if the Town Board decides to move forward with an ordinance, a public hearing about the ordinance is set and public comment is solicited.

After the public hearing, the Town Board makes the final decision concerning any addition to the Zoning Ordinance or an amendment to it.

— Kim Lewicki
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See Classifieds page 23
residents and families gather for Thanksgiving dinner

The Fidelia Eckerd Living Center at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital hosted its annual Thanksgiving meal on Monday, Nov. 23. Approximately 200 residents, family members, and employees joined the celebration.

"Since many of our residents are unable to travel to see their families during the holidays, we bring the holidays to their home, here at our living center" says Shawna Melott, administrator.

Families drove from all around, locally and out of state, to spend special time with their relatives. Orange table clothes and fresh floral arrangements transformed the dining hall. The floral arrangements were a special gift provided by Judy Fields. Spiral ham, candied yams, corn bread stuffing, gravy, cole slaw and green beans were all on the menu. Pumpkin cheesecake and apple pie topped off the traditional meal.

"It's important to allow family members the opportunity to spend time with their loved ones during the holidays. Time spent with family is invaluable and priceless. Monday morning and throughout the evening, the living center was filled with smiling faces, good conversations, and aromas of home cooked food. Celebrations like this provide great opportunities for needed social attention. Thanks to our Eden program we can provide these occasions for our residents and their families to enjoy," says Melott.

"Both of my children moved to Tennessee this year so the Thanksgiving dinner allowed me to have the family atmosphere I would have missed this holiday," said Flo Warren, a 5-year resident of the FELC. "Plans are underway for a Christmas Party on Dec. 18 which include hors d'oeuvres, music, and a visit from Saint Nick."

The Fidelia Eckerd Living Center is an 84-bed skilled nursing facility located on the campus of Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Since 1993 when the center opened, its goal is to provide residents superior services delivered by a staff dedicated to the highest standards of care.

Fidelia Eckerd Living Center is among the 10 percent of North Carolina Nursing facilities which voluntarily seek and receive full accreditation from the Joint Commission. A high staff-to-resident ratio exceeds the requirements of state and other governing agencies.

Residents reside in both private and semi-private rooms, and enjoy a wide variety of activities, including music, books, bingo, Bible study, exercising, trips to baseball games, fishing spots and cultural events.

Mountain views, linen dining and the "Eden Alternative," which emphasizes close and continuing relationships with children animals and other adults, are some of the outstanding features of the Fidelia Eckerd Living Center. In addition, the medical resources of Highlands-Cashiers Hospital are just seconds away as the two facilities are physically connected.

... TAX HIKE continued from page 1
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... POLICE & FIRE continued from page 21

to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Zachary Road. The victim was taken to the hospital.
• At 5:33 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire at the entrance of Sherwood Forest where an autumn display was on fire due to an electric light inside a pumpkin.

Nov. 22
• At 2:03 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence in Oak Square concerning a 51-year-old male. He was taken to Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, transferred to Mission Memorial in Asheville where he died.

Nov. 23
• At 9:37 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call in Highlands Plaza concerning a disoriented man. There was no transport.
• At 11:28 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Horse Cove Road. It was false.
• At 1:59 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Salt Rock Court where the caretaker had set off the alarm when he put off bug bombs.

Nov. 24
• At 3:49 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Spruce Lane concerning a 48-year-old female about whom her family was concerned.

Nov. 28
• At 5:17 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a possible structure fire in Oak Square. It was an electrical problem.

Nov. 29
• At 8:10 a.m., the dept. responded to a call of a possible structure fire at a residence on Wingina Place but the smoke associated with the call was due to a power line down on some rhododendrons.
• At 12:53 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on 64 Clubhouse Lane concerning a 90-year-old woman. There was no transport.
• At 2:53 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of smoke in the vicinity of Harris Drive but it was due to a controlled burn.

Dec. 1
• At 8:25 a.m., the dept. responded to possible electric fire when a transformer blew on N. 4th Street. The Highlands electrical dept. was called.
• At 8:28 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at the Episcopal Church that was set off by cookies burning in the microwave.

Jerry Moore has joined local forces to raise money for the Food Pantry. Moore donated a 22-lb chocolate Santa which will be raffled off with proceeds going to the Pantry. Moore asked David Long, in the youth program at the Highlands United Methodist Church and other students from Highlands School to help sell raffle tickets. They are $1 each or six for $5. The drawing will be Thursday, Dec. 24. To buy a ticket stop by Kilwin’s on Main Street or call the church at 526-3376 or Long at 526-4394.

Children tell Santa Christmas wishes

Right after the tree lighting Saturday night, families lined up to talk to Santa who was set up outside the Visitor Center. For more photos, go to www.highlandsinfo.com and click on Events.

Photo by Jim Lewicki
UNC-Chapel Hill students studying at the Highlands Biological Station will present the results of their internship and group research at a special closing event on December 9th at 3:30 PM.

The students have been in residence at the Highlands Biological Station since August studying the biodiversity of the southern Appalachian region.

Part of their program includes internships and group research with local organizations. This year, the Highlands Biological Station partnered with the Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory, the Little Tennessee Watershed Association, the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, the Highlands Plateau Audubon Society, the Wilderness Society and the Highlands Plateau Greenway to complete projects that forward the organizations' conservation and educational initiatives.

Student research ranged from field studies looking for rare species of salamanders to the development of environmental education curriculum and citizen science research projects for local schools.

Other projects included developing a plan for revegetating sections of the Highlands Greenway with native plant species, updating the State of the Streams report for the Little Tennessee watershed, and looking for trends in Highlands' Important Bird Area, recently designated by the Audubon Society, using historic and recent birding records, including recently-discovered archival material from the Biltmore Estate.

The students will also present their work with data on fish abundance and diversity in the greater Little Tennessee watershed, collected over a 20-year period by Dr. William McLarney of Franklin. This project is a collaboration between the Coweeta Hydrologic Lab, the Little Tennessee Watershed Association, and the Highlands Biological Station with help from the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust.

The public is invited to attend the symposium and closing event for the students as they prepare to depart Highlands and return to Chapel Hill. The presentations will begin at 3:30 PM and will be followed by a reception.

The event will be held at the Highlands Biological Station in its newly-renovated Bruce Biodiversity Building, located at 265 N. Sixth Street (but easily accessible from the Nature Center). Call 828-526-2602 for further information.