Mother Nature & technology duke it out

Around 4 a.m. Wednesday morning citizens on the Highlands Plateau awoke to silence, darkness and bitter cold. Not an electric heater crested, an appliance hummed or a DVD player flickered. The power had gone out.

During the early morning of Feb. 4, unrelenting winter weather buffeted the plateau with roaring winds, subzero temperatures that turned all moisture to ice and adjusting of snow, but that’s not what caused the outage. It was a faulty piece of equipment inside the Duke Power substation at Mirror Lake Road and U.S. 64 west.

Town crews were awakened around 4 a.m. when the call went out and by 9 a.m., once the bad piece of equipment was replaced with a backup piece, slowly the lines on the Highlands grid were turned on.

“We’re turning the system back on line by line at a time and trying not to overload it,” said Town Engineer Lamar Nix. “With everyone having heaters and hot water heaters on, it was a real challenge keeping the system running.”

No decisions were made, just ground work laid, but Town Manager Jim Fatand presented an agenda that outlined items to both initiate discussion and to inform.

Facilitators, Bill Gibson and Tom Tyre from the Southwest Commission kept board members and staff on task allowing for enough discussion per topic during the seven-hour retreat.

Several times, both men told the board how lucky they were to have a certified engineer on staff in Lamar Nix, because with this expertise exact information concerning project stats and costs are available to the board at all times which inevitably saves the town time and money and will ultimately put Highlands ahead for grants and perhaps the federal government’s stimulus package.

“Without an engineer on staff, most municipalities are always facing a crisis,” said Tyre. “Whereas you are constantly planning rather than reacting to the moment.”

The old Pierson Inn to rise again

As of Jan. 29, the NC School Report became available to the public and though only considered a “snapshot,” Highlands School fared very well compared to other schools in the Macon County and the state.

Highlands School had 399 students in 2007-2008 compared to the average number of students in schools with similar grade ranges at the district, or state levels. Those were 265 district wide and 289 state wide.

The average number of students enrolled in the typical K-8 classroom in Highlands School was 23. Highlands School had 11 classrooms.

Highlands School report card a good one

As of Jan. 29, the NC School Report became available to the public and though only considered a “snapshot,” Highlands School fared very well compared to other schools in the Macon County and the state.
Remember that Highlands' bears are wild creatures, not ‘zoo’ animals

Dear Editor,

A fed bear is a dead bear. Matt Eberz has missed the boat on the bear issue as evidenced in his column “Another POV” in the Jan. 29 issue of this paper. It is attitudes like his that lead to dangerous and dead bears.

The Little Bear Pen mamma bear is raising a generation of cubs that know how to feed themselves from human trash. This is even more true now that such trash is available to the bears even in winter months.

The trash habit of bears creates a dangerous situation, as the lady who was bitten by (most likely) this bear now knows. The town has been warned and yet continues to allow people in this neighborhood to leave trash within the reach of the bears. The neighbors then “gleefully” watch from their cars and somehow impuas a “gentleness to them” (says) there is nothing to fear. This is a perfect example, not of “unspoiled forests and mountains” and “living in harmony” with “magnificent creatures,” but of succumbing to the clarified, storybook personification of wild animals.

We recently traveled in big bear country and learned convincingly that most bear problems are created by people. (The poisoning incident is sad, but it is isolated and was an unintended consequence of a separate criminal act.) Bears became dangerous in Yellowstone and Glacier primarily because they lost their fear and raised generations of cubs whose first thought of food was trash. Quite a few people were killed as a consequence.

Today the rangers take the bear situation very seriously. Campgrounds have bear boxes and impose fines for their disregard. Towns require bear-proof dumpsters and cans.

Of course, everyone respects the grizzly. But interestingly, most injuries to people are caused by black bears. Why? Perhaps because they remind us of our childhood teddy bears and seem, from the safety of our cars, somehow gentle. But the very fact that these Highlands bears did not run off when they spotted Matt’s car shows that they are quite accustomed to, and not afraid of, people. It was probably this same group of bears that was on the porch of a friend of mine recently and could not be scared off with the usual banging of pots and flashing of porch lights.

A mamma with three cubs at your back door is a dangerous thing. These bears are going to hurt someone and will end up being destroyed if the neighbors do not take great care about securing their trash and birdfeed. They are not gentle. It will be a sad day in Highlands if it is a visiting grandchild who finds this out.

Dinah Davis
Highlands

Observations on ‘The WASP State’

Dear Editor,

In the autumn of my years, I find that one of my life's pleasures is reading the Highlands' Newspaper, while taking a cup of my favorite Lapsang tea. While some articles are thought-provoking, some funny and some very informative, I nearly choked while reading Ms. Brugger's “The WASP State” in the Jan. 29 issue.

Now I'm sure that Ms. Brugger is a very nice lady, but bandying around the acronym WASP is clearly emotive and very negative. While I admit I don't know much about anything, I always understood that contempt based on a person's ethnicity, skin color or religion was deemed somewhat reprehensible, if not bigoted. I mean we are referring to White Anglo Saxon Protestants aren't we? This nasty little acronym identifies the skin color, race and religion of a group of people while at the same time linking them to a predatory stinging insect. If that is the case, could it be that the acronym WASP is bordering on; dare I say it; Hate Speech? No, it couldn't be. Maybe I'm just being too sensitive. So let us examine the article and play the acronym game.

Ms. Brugger further gives us a brief synopsis of U.S. history in which our White Anglo Saxon Protestant forebears deprived the Native Americans of their land, while still finding time to make life miserable for peoples of other nationalities and ethnic origin. Not making excuses, but had she considered that perhaps our Anglo Saxon forebears learned this dastardly skill from their Norman conquerors? After all, being put into an iron collar, called a serv and told to do this and that, or else get maimed or gilded, must have been very traumatic. This must have been “The MANGE State.” Mailed Arrogant Romans Gilding Englishmen.

Back to U.S. history, I agree with Ms. Brugger on the point that the Native Americans were treated very badly. But let's not be too tree-huggry here. Let's be realistic for a moment. Many of the Native American Indians were not the innocent “philosophers of the plains” they have been cracked up to be. Tribal rivalry, looting and unjustified acts of violence were the daily norm, just like my old school, in fact. Stories of attacks on settlers and on the wagon trains that brought those settlers to new land are real. Maybe we could call this “The NASTY State.” Native Americans Slaughtering Trespassing Yankees.

I further learned, from her article that Ms. Brugger has a problem with Israel being referred to as a “Jewish State.” She wants us to believe that this is the core of the average Israeli's problems. Problems like having a Quassam rocket come through your dining room window on Bridge Night. Or having a series of bombs go off in your neighborhood. I can personally attest to the latter as being highly unsettling. Sad to say, we live in an age where it is normal to take the blame away from where it truly lies. After all we have code expressions like “gun violence” and “road rage” where the focus is taken off those who commit the act, blaming instead an inanimate object. Here is my example of this blame shifting. Ms. Brugger wants to shift the blame for these attacks, away from the terrorists and place them squarely in the lap of the victims. Perhaps this is then “The ABJECT State.” Actually Believing Jewish Existence Causes Terrorism.

Serious though, continuing this same thought process and we crack open a history book or two; we can pretty much find out where to point the finger of blame for Israel’s woes. The Romans for instance, wasn’t it they, who in a fit of pique, decided to rename Judea: Palestine? Arthur Balfour the British politician is also culpable. After all it was he, in 1917, favored of the creation of a national home for the Jewish people. Again, those perfidious British people. Yet, let's not forget that the Romans, who commit the act, blaming instead an inanimate object. Here is my example of this blame shifting. Ms. Brugger wants to shift the blame for these attacks, away from the terrorists and place them squarely in the lap of the victims. Perhaps this is then “The NASTY State.” Native Americans Slaughtering Trespassing Yankees.

Oh and I almost forgot, and I know it's heresy, but as a Jew, I cannot ignore my own book or two; we can pretty much find out where to point the finger of blame for Israel’s woes. The Romans for instance, wasn’t it they, who in a fit of pique, decided to rename Judea: Palestine? Arthur Balfour the British politician is also culpable. After all it was he, in 1917, favored of the creation of a national home for the Jewish people. Again, those perfidious British people. Yet, let's not forget that the Romans, who commit the act, blaming instead an inanimate object. Here is my example of this blame shifting. Ms. Brugger wants to shift the blame for these attacks, away from the terrorists and place them squarely in the lap of the victims. Perhaps this is then “The NASTY State.” Native Americans Slaughtering Trespassing Yankees.

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Email: HighlandsEditor@aol.com

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* THE PLATEAU'S POSITION *

• LETTERS •

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265 Oak St.; RO. Box 2703, Highlands, N.C. • 28741

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• See LETTERS page 16
Butler Sterling Harkins

Butler Sterling Harkins, 98, passed peacefully in his home in Oxnard, California on January 10, 2009. He was born in Kansas on October 1, 1910, and raised in Nebraska. At a very early age he knew the life of the farm was not for him and so dampered to be allowed to attend school at the age of four. He was five when he decided to be a doctor or teacher, the latter of which he became by the age of 17, teaching in a one-room school in Kansas. At this time he was attending Peru State Teachers College.

After graduating he felt the call of the West and moved to California. He said he knew immediately when he smelled the ocean, the orange blossoms and the celery fields that this was his paradise on earth.

He lived in California the rest of his life, summering in later years in Highlands, North Carolina.

He received his master’s degree in education from the University of Southern California and began his 50-year teaching career in Oxnard.

He was principal of Ramona School when World War II broke out, at which time he joined the Navy and served in the South Solomon Islands and Guadalcanal.

While in the Navy, he published his book “Booted Thru Boot Camp,” poems of humor and pathos illustrated by one of the Walt Disney artists.

When he retired from the service, he opened Oxnard’s first bookstore, The Book Haven, and resumed teaching at Oxnard High School District where he taught many subjects, including creative writing and American literature. He was listed in “Who’s Who in California” and was cited by the California State Assembly for Outstanding Service in the Field of Education.

He also received recognition for his volunteer work with the Community Concert Association and for his vision and efforts in the construction of Oxnard’s cultural center, the Oxnard Auditorium.

Shortly after he enlisted in the Navy, he met his bride, Bess Hines, who grew up in Highlands and was known in later years as the “Poet Laureate of Highlands.”

Love of poetry, specifically nature poetry, drew them together initially and was a shared devotion throughout their 42-year marriage.

They met in 1944 at a California Chaparral Poets meeting at which Robert Service was the guest speaker. On this occasion one of Bess’s poems was read and Butler said, “I want to meet the woman who wrote this.”

Seven dates later they were married and hitch-hiked to Sequoia National Park for their honeymoon. The milkman delivered them from the base of the mountain to their final destination in the park. From this point on, this beautiful place was frequented yearly by the family—Butler, Bess and their two daughters, Estelle and Sarah—and ultimately inspired their collaboration, a book of poetry entitled “Sequoia Bound.”

Butler originated the poetic form he entitled Harquain, but his real love was the Japanese form Haiku, of which he wrote hundreds. His books include “Leaves of the Gingko,” “Maple Leaf Moments,” “Leaves of Autumn,” “Leaves of Aloneness,” an ancestral study, “The Harkins Clan,” and his children’s book “Swing Down, Sandman.”

The following is an example of his Haiku: The cold wintry moon; The emptiness of the house; The voice of the dock.

During his lifetime, it was written of him, “Having personal charm and a boundless interest in living, he lights up whatever place he happens to be in.”

This proved to be true to the end of his life as he retained joy in small things and a willing, contagious sense of humor.

Huell continued to uplift and inspire all who read his poetry and remember his ready laughter.

Butler is survived by his daughters, Sarah Harkins of Highlands and Estelle Harkins of Oxnard.

A memorial gathering will be announced in the summer in Highlands.
Having fun with poppycock!

Fred Wooldridge
Feedback is encouraged!
email: askfredanything@aol.com

As a columnist, I have observed that politicians use poppycock in their speeches, and I've noticed that it's not always the case. However, I've found that this is not the case when it comes to me.

**Quote of the Year**

"I cannot tell a lie"... and actually meant it. This quote is from Abraham Lincoln, and I believe it's the perfect example of a politician telling the truth.

**Changed Activities**

"I have great tolerance and respect for Highlands' politicians because... well... they aren't pure politicians, except when it comes to poppycock. Here's an example. Instead of saying an employee has been fired, Highlands' poppycocker's say he has "changed activities." Is that a fun phrase, or what? "Changed activities" means you were working and now you're not. And instead of telling a fired employee he better leave town to find work, poppycocker's say, "He'll have an exciting career in real estate." That's poppycocking at its best.

**Real Estate**

Selling real estate in Highlands in the dead of winter in the middle of a deep recession that's heading for depression is as exciting as listening to a watershed lecture at 3 a.m. Remember, when it's in their best interest, poppycocker's can and will put a happy face on everything. I have been accused of being a Betz fan. NOT! I hardly know the guy. Besides, I would never say all those flowery things about him before giving him the boot. It's not my style. When I fired a police officer, he knew exactly why. But politicians can feel they have to spread a little poppycock around before giving someone the shaft. The only reason I spoke for Betz is because I have impressed him's been able to survive many political regimes over two decades of Highlands' nasty politics while keeping the place running pretty damn good. Tough act to follow, don't ya think?

Now don't get down on our mayor. He's a swell guy and is only doing this job as head poppycocker for our town. He's a schmoozer who schmoozes well.

Hey, sometimes even fired employees use poppycock by saying stupid things like, "I'm leaving for family reasons." (Whereis Gantantein, anyway?) Just once, can a fired employee say, "I'm leaving because I got canned and the commissioners are all jerks." No poppycockin' there. That's better than saying "I'll truly miss the place." Hey, I got dumped from the Highlander newspaper and I don't miss the place.

Finally, allow me to take a poppycock survey. Raise your hand if you believed what you heard presidential candidates say during the election. (Pause, while I count.) Wow, never mind, I can't count that high. Maybe they should consider attending poppycock school? P.S. - If you can't find my column next week it's because I "changed activities."
The future is hard to see

What will happen to our country is anybody's guess. I talked with a friend this weekend, a 61-year-old banker who recently lost his job. To make matters much worse, his retirement savings have evaporated as the value of his former employer's stock has fallen from $80 a share to $8.

He spends his days online searching for affordable health insurance, and perhaps a job. He described the current recession as an "economic 9/11" and predicted that the country would undergo permanent changes as a result.

There were five of us, ranging in age from the mid-50s to the upper 60s. Three of us are still employed. We all agreed on one thing. This recession feels different from any we have experienced in our lifetimes. Will the changes be profound and lasting? Maybe.

My parents and their generation were shaped by the Great Depression. We, the children of the children of the Great Depression, were marked as well. We learned to be thrifty and to pay in cash. We were taught to do without if having something required going into debt. Gradually, through the decades, we forgot the lessons of our parents, learned to be comfortable with credit cards and fancy mortgages.

My initial response was that the belt tightening was a temporary phenomenon, that in a few months we would be back at Circuit City, buying 60" flat-screen TVs. Oh, Circuit City has ceased to exist. Well, we can still run down to Wachovia and take out a loan. You say that Wachovia was bought out by Wells Fargo, and that its employees and retirees lost as much of their savings as my banker friend.

There is more hardship to come. More retailers, banks, and manufacturers will bite the dust. Their employees and investors will feel the pain. They, too, will lose their jobs and their retirement savings. Maybe we'll start living within our means. Perhaps the obscene executive compensations of recent decades will fall in line with the rest of the world. Maybe Americans will start working hard again. Those of us who still have jobs should be grateful. Two of our nurses were complaining about being over-worked. I reminded them that we were fortunate that we had not been forced to reduce staff.

Neither of my grandfathers lost his job in the Depression. I remember stories of unemployed men coming to the back door for food. They were never turned away. The other day I saw a guy sitting on the side of the road in Dillard. His sign read, "Work for food." His dog and the sum of his worldly possessions were at his side. I found myself wondering how close we were to 1930.

We have lost the sense of community, the willingness to feed the hobo at the back door. Banks petition the government for hundreds of billions of dollars and reward CEOs of failing enterprises with billions in bonuses. Auto executives descend on Washington requesting tens of billions in bail out money for their faltering industry. They literally descended from the sky, the president of each of the "Big Three" arriving in his private jet. I have no idea if we can relearn the lesson of thrift or the nobility of hard work. The sense of responsibility to our neighbors may have been lost forever. Corporate greed may be permanent, only occasionally tempered by government and an angry population. I think my friend was right, that the sobering effects of this economic 9/11 may be with us for a generation or more. Restraint might well produce a leaner, greener, kinder society, or we may just be poorer. We're not going to become a third-world nation, a prediction a friend recently offered. My answer to him was that he hadn't been in the third world. We might never again reign supreme in the family of nations. Our empire may well be in permanent decline. These are questions that none of us can answer. It is quite possible that in the wake of this economic carnage, our nation may regain its footing and forge ahead as before.

Some of us have surely changed forever. My friend, a 75-year-old retired surgeon who lost his life savings and my banker friend are among them. Those of us who still have jobs, at least those in my little circle, have decided that retirement is no longer in our plans. We've simply surrendered the dream of a pleasant, secure retirement. We will work as long as our health permits and our companies survive. After lives of hard work, we can no longer afford retirement, or at least believe that we can't afford it. And even if we could, like our depression-era parents, we have lost confidence in the stability in financial system. We'll never again trust the stock market, or our ability to make a fresh start.

In public, we pretend that we had no desire to retire anyway, that it is our jobs that define us. In private, we're more honest. We aren't going to risk our future and our families' future to anyone but ourselves. So, yeah, we're different. And if enough of us have changed, the country will have changed with us.
Too big to jail

Amidst all the talk of bailouts for the financial world, have you heard anything about investigations? Has there been any talk about setting up a commission or a special prosecutor to investigate whether there was any deliberate criminal behavior behind the financial meltdown? Hasn’t the implication been that all of this was one’s fault, that there was no criminal activity at all, just “irrational exuberance”?

For my husband the breaking point came when Bernie Madoff was allowed to stay out of jail while awaiting trial, because, the appellate judge ruled, the prosecutor did not prove he was a danger to the community. “Not a danger!” Arthur cried. “How can someone who has stolen $50 billion not be a danger to society? Evidently he is too big to jail.”

According to Newsweek writer Michael Hirsh, there is criminal behavior galore behind our current crisis: “To a far greater extent than the public realizes, fraudulently inflated home values, wholly invented incomes and other illegal schemes figured in a huge percentage of subprime loans that were turned into securities during the boom — possibly at least 50% nationwide, according to county and state officials as well as real-estate experts interviewed around the country. Some experts, like Anthony Accetta, a former federal prosecutor in New York, contend that many big Wall Street players know far more than they are admitting about the extent of this fraud.”

Hirsh says that in the spring of 2008 FBI Director Robert Mueller claimed there were 35 task forces at work and 19 Wall Street firms being investigated, but in October, when Hirsh’s article was published, the FBI was declining all interview requests on the subject. Why the change? Hirsh speculates: “One reason, no doubt, is that the Bush administration is deeply concerned about causing more giant firms and hedge funds to collapse. Their principals have become, in a sense, too big to jail.”

There it was again, the phrase “too big to jail.” In America we like to think of ourselves as a classless society where everyone is equal under the law. Unfortunately, that is an illusion. The rich and the powerful are not treated the same as the rest of us. Folksinger Phil Ochs wrote: “And a rich man never died upon the chair” in his song “Iron Lady” about the electric chair.

Without investigation of the crimes responsible for the financial crisis we will have more crises just like this one. In the early 1930s the Senate Banking and Currency Committee investigated what had led to the stock market crash of 1929. The committee hearings, led by council Ferdinand Pecora, documented the abuses of the financial industries and paved the way for reform legislation.

Financial titans aren’t the only ones “too big to jail” in our society. Politicians fit in that category too. In 1974 Richard Nixon was pardoned by his successor and allowed to fly away to California rather than stand trial for obstructing justice. The whole nation sighed in relief and went back to their lives, but was that really the best thing for the nation as a whole? Did we ensure that no future president would abuse the office?

During Reagan’s presidency, the Iran-Contra scheme violated the Constitution, and there were grounds for impeachment of Reagan and prosecution of Vice President GW Bush. But the Democrats were afraid to start impeachment proceedings so soon after Watergate (“too destabilizing for the country”) so Reagan and Bush went unpunished.

We’ll skip over the absolutely ludicrous impeachment of Bill Clinton for lying about sex that was based on pure partisan vindictiveness.

Currently, there are very serious charges leveled at the George W Bush administration for multiple crimes, and once again many people, President Obama among them, are urging that he be forgiven. You may be sure that the last thing I want is to hear anything more about former President Bush or to see him limited time and resources of the federal government devoted to the tasks at hand. However, I believe that there is a vital issue here that we ignore at our peril.

What we saw during the GW Bush administration is the belief that there are people, at minimum the President, who are above the law. This is a fundamental attack on one of the most basic principles of our democracy — that no one is above the law — and must not be ignored.

Of the many things that were outrageous under Bush, one of the most egregious were his “signing statements,” where he would sign a bill from Congress and then declare his intention to ignore it. In other words, he and his administration did not need to obey the law. (See my article “What President Bush Has Taken From Me” June 2008).

House Judiciary Committee Chairman John Conyers, (D, Michigan) has released “Reining in the Imperial Presidency,” a 486-page report detailing abuses of the Bush administration and recommending steps to address them, including a special investigative commission. In an op-ed in the Washington Post Conyers wrote, “Arthur Schlesinger Jr. popularized the term ‘imperial presidency’ in the 1970s to describe an executive who had assumed...”
When you come down to it, there’s a lot that can be explained by Swiss cheese. Learning to trust after heartache and keeping the mind alive are just two examples. So is a drawer filled with socks.

Do you know people who refuse to commit to a new relationship after having their heart broken? They stick their chins out, and explain their position by saying, “I was hurt once.” Once? Are you kidding me? Once? Life is about getting hurt, being disappointed, and then picking yourself up, and getting on with life.

There are people who have the worst hands that life can deal – betrayal, illness, disaster – and against all odds, they pick themselves up, and get on with their lives. For years, this has intrigued me. How can you account for the way people deal with the hardships that life invariably churns out? Swiss cheese, that’s my explanation.

Some people see their hearts as a huge chunk of cheese. Each hardship, disappointment, discouragement takes a little chunk out of their hearts. The more they let people and events get to them, the more they feel diminished. The only way they can protect themselves is to harden their hearts and keep everyone out.

On the other hand, you have people who feel that without others, their lives are incomplete. These are the kind of people who feel that their hearts are full of holes, and only by giving of themselves can they heal the emptiness and loneliness in their lives. Each time they fall in love, they plug up a hole. Each time they choose to do good over evil, they plug up a hole. Each time they go out of their way to put someone else’s happiness and well-being over their own, they plug up a hole – often without knowing it. The main difficulty is figuring out just what kind of cheese fan you are.

I just spent two weeks in my old home town of Waynesboro, VA. My Mom just had her second cataract surgery, and I hung out for a while to make sure she had the best chance to heal from the operation. Don’t get me wrong. I enjoy hanging out with Maman. Even if she weren’t my mother, I’d want to be around her. She’s smart. She’s funny. She is remarkably tolerant of my eccentricities.

We were riding in the elevator one day, and saw that there was going to be a presentation about recognizing the signs of Alzheimer’s and dementia. You don’t have to hang out around older people long to realize how this is an issue that haunts them. Every time they forget their keys, or find themselves in a room, and can’t remember why they went there, they fear the shadow of serious mental disability coming into their lives.

I thought I’d have to persuade Maman to attend the lecture, but she beat me to it. We agreed to attend, each hoping we’d hear facts that would put our minds at ease. Of course, being the two of us, the dialogue had to be a little quirky. “What do you think the lecture will be like? Do you think they’ll give us a quiz or something?” asked Maman.

“Nah, I don’t think so,” I replied. “Hey, maybe they’ll show a porn film, and ask if it rings any bells with anyone,” I suggested. “Oh, you’re terrible!” chuckled Maman, who knows by now that I’m pulling her leg.

The discussion was interesting and instructive. It put a lot of our worries to rest. Misplacing your keys? Not a biggie. Putting your phone in the refrigerator? Not good. Not good at all. We were encouraged with the little tips to make life easier and less stressful. Always put your keys, wallet and handbag in the same place. It cuts down on stress and saves you the annoyance of having to comb your house frantically when you’re rushing out the door.

Do crossword puzzles, jigsaw puzzles, Sudokus, and other games that keep the grey cells engaged and involved. Take a regular date to watch “Jeopardy.” Watch PBS, and programs like the History Channel or Discovery. Go to concerts, visit museums. One lady sighed, and said: “I just don’t have any room in my head for new information!”

But that’s seldom the case.

“If you don’t use it, you lose it!” applies to both your body and your mind. That big hunk of Swiss cheese you’re carrying around in your head has plenty of holes to be plugged up with knowledge – both trivial and profound. Bored people become boring people. Don’t be one. Oh, and just for the record, they didn’t show us any raunchy movies. Honest.

Years ago, I was hanging out with friends around Valentine’s Day. The discussion centered on the question: “What’s the nicest thing your partner has ever done for you?” Most of the answers were standard fare, but the one which really intrigued me was from my friends Eddie and Emma. He smiled lovingly at her, and replied, “The socks. Definitely the socks.” I knew there was a story behind that one. Later, I cornered Eddie, and asked for all the details.

It seems that when Eddie and Emma got together, he was really rather a slob. His shirts were covered in stains, and most were missing buttons. His jackets were just as bad. But worst of all were his socks.

Alas, I was given to understanding Swiss cheese theory.
The snow job continues

I was really going to give the global warming thing a rest, hoping the momentum had finally turned against Gore’s hocus-pocus, and then reality set in. I had TV news on in the background when the messiah started giving a speech. Before I could switch the channel, he had already given his routine opening, reminding us that he had inherited a financial mess. He then immediately launched into his best Gore impersonation, telling the world that global warming is a fact and the threat must be dealt with now. The last I heard was “it will create millions of jobs.” It’s not that I don’t trust his concern over global warming, however a reader forwarded information to me put out by the Institute for Liberty that led me to believe that his priorities are skewed. Perhaps the hoopla surrounding his inauguration obscured the fact that, due to the huge turnout and surrounding celebrations, the carbon footprint of your environmental conscience president is estimated to have created more than a half-billion pounds of CO2 into your atmosphere. “It would take the average U.S. household 57,598 years to produce a carbon footprint equal to that of the new president’s house warming party.”

How’s this for delicious irony. From Drudge (last week), “Al Gore is scheduled before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Wednesday morning to once again testify on the ‘urgent need’ to combat global warming. But Mother Nature seems ready to freeze the proceedings. A ‘Winter Storm Watch’ has been posted for the nation’s capital and there is a potential for significant snow…sleet… or ice accumulations.” Safe travel is doubtful. Priceless.

Meanwhile, the Senate confirmed Timothy Geithner as Secretary of the Treasury, overlooking the fact that, among other sins, he is a tax cheat. Geithner clearly lied in his confirmation hearings about his failure to pay income taxes for several years. He paid years worth when his vetting disclosed his failure to pony up but refused to pay prior two years levy because the statute of limitations had run out. Classy.

As Secretary of the Treasury, Geithner would have dominion over the IRS. Now, he says he just didn’t know his income from working at the World Bank was taxable. His employer, as a matter of policy, gives frequent directives as to the taxability of their employees’ income. Either he can’t read, is painfully ignorant or he is a crook. I’m betting on number three. An audit also disclosed he tried to claim sizable deductions that were clearly ineligible, and he also employed an illegal alien as a housekeeper. Other than that, he has a sterling character.

So why was he confirmed as Secretary of the Treasury? Because we need his genius to get us out of our economic woes. What? As president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, he managed the Bear Stearns debacle, the Lehman Brothers debacle, the AIG bailout debacle and was instrumental in advising then Sec. Hank Paulson on the $700 billion financial bailout debacle. Oh, we need his genius all right. He’s a tax cheat and a crook. Nothing better. If you or I pulled that stuff, they’d put us away for a good while. Evidently tax evasion is all it takes to serve in Obama’s cabinet.

Daschle, the South Dakota Democrat chosen to lead Obama’s health reform efforts, recently filed amended tax returns to report $128,000 in back taxes and $12,000 in interest. Of course there were no penalties since he is a “chosen one.” I never liked the little weeny when he was in the Senate and I like him less now.

Daschle has not yet been confirmed at the time of this writing but the lack of interest in his integrity by the Dems lead one to believe that he will. I’m sure some rationale will be put forward claiming his brilliance is necessary in our time of need. He’s a tax cheat and a crook (sound familiar?) but I’ll bet he’ll be a good little Obama soldier.

So, if tax evaders are not your style, how about avowed Socialists? According to the Washington Times, “Until last week, Carol M. Browner, Obama’s pick as global warming czar, was listed as one of 14 leaders of a socialist group’s Commission for a Sustainable World Society, which calls for ‘global governance’ and says rich countries must shrink their economies to address climate change.”

“Socialist International, an umbrella group for many of the world’s social democratic political parties says it supports so-called ‘social change.’”

“Is there a group of Socialists who aren’t Socialists?”

Don’t say I didn’t warn you.

**... SPIRITUALLY continued from page 9**

Home Repair, and I can get you some people to help you!” He said, “You know Paul, I do appreciate that, but I have been doing this for about two years and I would appreciate you not saying anything to anyone because I would rather just do the work and talk about it.” He repaired over 40 homes in that community when I was there and without a lot of fanfare. He just did it.

We often search for the right words to say, when we should be searching for the right action. Don’t just tell someone you love him or her; show him or her. Don’t just tell someone you are thinking about him or her; help him or her or visit him or her. There are those times we worry way too much about the right words and saying them correctly. Let your actions speak.

This little preacher needs to remember that lesson because I have worried way too much about words and not enough about actions. Wouldn’t it be great if people said this about us— “He or she preached a sermon everyday, without saying a word!”
**Spirituallly Speaking**

Some rambling thoughts from a little preacher...

Pastor Paul Christy
Highlands United Methodist Church

This past Sunday, I subjected my congregation to a sermon that I later wanted to apologize for because I don’t think I ever made the point that I needed or wanted to make. Have you ever wanted to communicate something to another person and the more you talk, the worse you seem to be confusing the person you are talking to? So when a preacher and your sermon confuses the people you are talking to, it is not a good thing. But in spite of that confusing, misguided sermon, the good people of my church came out at 12 p.m. and shook my hand and smiled and said “see you next week.” And I thought, “Really?” Now you may ask yourself why all this talk of lack of communication this week. You see I think there are those times when we think we need to say the right words, but it is our actions that speak, not our words. I want to share a story with you that I think illustrates the point.

Several years ago, I was serving a church in another town and we talked a lot about helping others. There was a soup kitchen that served meals to the needy, there was a medical clinic that gave care to those who could not afford medical care, and there were places that people could go to get clothes and household items that they needed for free. This community really tried to reach out to those who were in need, and I was proud to say that we had a lot of our church members who helped make all those ministries possible. Then the newspaper talked about those helping ministries and everyone seemed to be satisfied that as a community we were doing all we needed to do to help others.

We talked a lot about the many ways that that community was reaching out to others, and we talked a good game. In fact, there were people who came to see what we were doing from all over the state because they had heard all that was happening. We talked some more, and we explained how we were doing all this good for others.

Then, one Saturday right after a meeting with a bunch of people who wanted to learn about starting a similar mission in their community, I saw one of my church members at a home in the wrong part of town working on a house. I thought to myself, what is he doing here? The next day Sunday morning, I got to him right before Sunday School and I told him that I saw his truck at this house and said; “Yeah, that was my truck there, I was putting in a new bathroom in that house for an elderly lady who really needed it.”

I said, “Well who were you working for, what ministry?” He said this, “I don’t know that it was any ministry in particular, I guess I was just working for God.” I said to him, “You know we can start a new ministry in...”
On Thursday, Jan. 29, Highlands Town Board sequestered itself at The Mountain Learning Center to plan for both the immediate and future needs of Highlands. Present were the commissioners and staff personnel. The work session was orchestrated by Southwest Commission facilitators Bill Gibson and Tom Tyre. Town Manager Jim Fatland guided the board through a comprehensive agenda that dealt with everything from Town Board proceedings, capital improvements, general fund projects, equipment replacement, financing, personnel, finance and accounting and more.

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**Town Board Meetings**

Fatland opened the meeting with “housekeeping” issues concerning board meetings – mainly suggesting the use of a recording secretary like during the planning and zoning board meetings; the use of a consent agenda for routine and non-controversial items similar to the Macon County Commission and the school board; and distributing the agenda and backup materials prior to the Town Board meeting so the press and the board have time to digest it.

**Update on Duke Power**

Duke Power negotiations were discussed next since the town’s arrangement with Duke is set to end February 2010 with a new contract and new wholesale rates to begin March 1, 2010.

“We haven’t started negotiations yet, but the talk is they want a 20-year contract and want to bill monthly with the potential of rates changing monthly,” said Fatland. “We know rates are going to increase to the town, which means they will increase for the public. We may want to think about stepping up the rates in advance of this going into affect, perhaps at the start of the new fiscal year, so we don’t hit customers with a huge increase all at once,” he said.

Before automatically resigning with Duke Power, Commissioner Hank Ross suggested looking into other wholesale electric suppliers like Progress Energy, the N.C. Municipal Power Agency, TVA and Haywood Electric and others.

Nix said the physical connectivity is the only problem.

“Physical arrangements will usually involve getting power... WORKSESSION from page 1..."
improvement projects "shovel ready" to take the deadline. Contractor $250 a day each day it runs past complete by July 13, 2009 and will cost the ers when finished. The job is supposed to be changed." Touch the deal we had with them. But that's into the 'construction' business," he said. "A generation needs its own revolution," and maybe it's been too long since said, "Every generation needs its own revolu- and if we care about liberty we must do the unpleasant work of repudiating it. (See Harper's Magazine December 2008, "Justice After Bush," by Scott Horton) The American Revolution was fought to free us of tyranny, which is defined as a form of government in which the ruler is not restricted by a constitution or laws. Now we are allowing tyranny to creep in and if we care about liberty we must do the unpleasant work of repudiating it. Thomas Jefferson is reputed to have said, "Every generation needs its own revolu- the stimulus package – but water/sewer extension costs and dredging of lakes, are not sure. As per the master sewer plan, the town hopes to extend sewer to the north side of Mirror Lake, the unsewered areas of Lake Sequoyah, and the homes on Hickory Hill, Cobb, Chowan, and others in that area. "Shuler said each congressman and senator wants his or her district to make as many projects "shovel ready" so it's important to prioritize projects and have designs done," said Fatla. He said if designs are ready by

Update on Harris Lake Sewer Project

Nix reported that the project is 10%-15% complete, aiming for 15,000 feet of gravity line extending sewer service to new customers when finished. The job is supposed to be completed by July 13, 2009 and will cost the contractor $250 a day each day it runs past the deadline.

Capital Improvement Programs

Over the last few weeks, Fatla has been discussing the importance of having capital improvement projects "shovel ready" to take advantage of the federal government's stim-
We're live at Casa de Potts for a play by play of Maryland and North Carolina. It's always good to check out the enemy before a battle, and so tonight I am going to do a little scouting of the Heels before next week's showdown in Durham.

15:00 – UNC looks like they are going to shoot the ball well, which is bad news for Maryland. Just a quick note: Maryland is horrible. However, I bet they score more than 20 this half against the Heels.

9:55 – in the first half: Lawson has just hit two threes in a row and UNC has hit six already. They are very tough to beat when they shoot the ball like this.

8:30 – Sam Perk...er Ed Davis just got three offensive rebounds on one play before finally scoring. This just in...Danny Green got rejected by a Korean—I don’t think that I have ever typed that before.

(Commercial Break) Clyde Drexler still picks the old Alltel Commercials.

8:05 – Dave Neal (1) abuses Hansbrough again in the post...followed by another UNC three. Even the announcers are noting how Maryland is attacking Hansbrough on the offensive end and scoring, but UNC’s three point shooting is so hot right now it doesn’t matter. As I say this, Ellington hits another three.

1:37 – Hansbrough flops egregiously, and shockingly gets the call. No one talk to me about Duke flopping (which they do) when one of the strongest players in college hoops takes a dive on a guard to draw a foul.

Halftime Thoughts - UNC leads 60-44

Well, we knew Maryland was horrible, and we knew UNC could score, but this is a pretty tremendous offensive performance by the Heels in the first half. However, they better tighten up the defense if they want to compete for a national title. Duke held Maryland to 20 points in the first half, and UNC has given up more than double that. Conversely, Duke only had 45 at the half against Maryland, while UNC has scored an incredible 60 points.

Detour here to the Ohio State-Purdue game which is in overtime. Ohio State ends up pulling this one out-good win for the Buckeyes, although Purdue was playing without Big 10 player of the year candidate Robbie Hummel.

16:14 – 2nd Half – Roy Williams has obviously tell UNC to take it inside, because the Heels have only attempted one three in the second half. Maryland continues to be horrible...its amazing how far they have fallen since their 2002 national title.

15:41 – 2nd Half – Here is one of UNC’s dirty little secret...they only have two points from their bench right now, and their rotation has basically been shortened to seven players. It’s possible that fatigue could be a factor late in the season, much in the way that it has been for Duke the last two years.

15:10 – 2nd Half – If it were possible for me to love a UNC player, Ed Davis would be high on my list. The kid plays great defense and will be a star next year for North Carolina. Immediately after typing this, Dave Neal again beats Hansbrough and draws a foul. Neal then draws a charge, and the North Carolina crowd awakens from their nap to boo him. It’s amazing how a jersey can change the way a crowd feels about a guy. North Carolina fans love their spastic white guy, but hate all opposing spastic white guys. Duke fans love their cocky, arrogant guard but hate yours.

12:03 – 2nd Half – Ed Davis just picks up a crappy foul after 3 Maryland offensive rebounds...the UNC crowd boos halfheartedly.

11:17 – 2nd Half – Hansbrough refuses to pass out of another double team. Would it be non-PC if I started calling him the “White Hole?”

10:05 – 2nd Half – Deon Thompson with a flush off of an alleyoop after a spectacular block by Danny Green. Green is probably the best NBA prospect on North Carolina, and I could see him being a late first round pick and having a big impact on a good NBA team.

9:39 – 2nd Half – Hansbrough shoves two Terps out of the way to get an offensive rebound, misses the layup and is bailed out by the officials. If I seen a little bit better that Hansbrough is going to break J.J. Redick’s record, I am. It’s not that I like Redick all that much either, it’s just that I’m sure I feel the same way about Hansbrough that UNC fans felt about Redick. Just an aside about Hansbrough here. I love the guy, but I really feel that when players stay for 4 years, it gives us a chance to pick them apart that much more. Redick was exposed as a jump shooter after 4 years, and we have seen Hansbrough’s poor defense become exposed over 4 years in the ACC as well.

5:00 — 2nd Half – Ellington with 34 points, UNC has 16 three pointers in the game, and its obvious that they are not having any trouble on the offensive end.

Let’s hope that we don’t have any more violence in the last five minutes, we don’t need another NC State incident. A dominating win for North Carolina, and an all around terrific performance from the trio of Ellington, Danny Green and Ty Lawson.

Both the boys and girls beat Swain last Friday. Right, cheerleaders Carolyn Hornsby, flyer, and Katie Durham, Shelby Johnson and Bevan Schiff as bases at Friday's game. Left, Sarah Power goes for a basket at the Swain game. Thursday, Feb. 5, Highlands travels to Hiawassee Dam to play a makeup game; Friday, Feb. 6, its Senior Night at home against Rabun Gap and Monday there's a makeup game against Hendersonville at home.

Photos by Debbie Hornsby
Books bought with grant money now in

Highlands School Media Specialist Carol Bowen is pulling out all the stops to keep the Highlands School Media Center stocked with the latest and greatest for students and staff.

In 2007 she applied for the $10,000 grant from the Library Services Technology Act. The money was spent during the 2007/2008 school year.
The $10,000 grant was stretched when the Highlands School PTO and Highlands Rotary Club both donated matching funds to increase the total to $12,500.
The grant targeted the 700s [Arts and Recreation] and 900s [History and Geography] areas of the Dewey Decimal system.

Some 637 new books were added to the collection and more than 400 current books were weeded out because of physical condition, outdated copyright, or inaccurate/out-of-date information.

“We have just finished processing and getting the books ready for circulation,” said Bowen.

Anyone wishing to support the Highlands School Media Center are encouraged to contact Bowen at carol.bowen@mcsk-12.org.

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Perfect Attendance
3rd Six Weeks 2008-2009

GB - J. Chalker
Jeslyn Head
Kedra McCall
Jonathan Miller
Dillon Schmitt

K - J. McClelan
William Creswell
Diane Dallman
Joana Jimenez
Emily Knutelsky
Olivia Lewis
Giovana Fabino
Logan Petrone
Savannah Shaheen

1st - D. Sizemore
Matthew Campbell
Jessica Campbell
Lydia Clark
Camren Dalton
Colby Harris
Pablo Jimenez
Emily Leonard
Freda Olalde
Emma Weller

2nd - C. Cox
Grace Crowe
Bety Garcia
Katie McColl
Samuel Cole

Schmitt

2nd - M. Miller
Jake Billingsley
Reynita Contreras
Matson Gates
Hannah Holt
Lukas Nix

3rd - C. Murphy
Brittany Chastain
Manuel Contreras
Trinity Preda
Trinity Dendy

3rd - A. Coppage
Madison Dalton
Zachary De La Cruz
Olivia Diamond
Kimberly Feria
Jose Jimenez
Alexandra Preda
Cole Satterwhite

4th - D. West
Kelsie Billingsley
Emily Crowe
Ryan House
Tucker Johnson
Emily Mathis
Benjamin Miller
Kaitlin Moss

5th - M. Lane
Adam Schiffli
Jamie Walsh
Gabriel Webb
Jackson Vroon

7th - B. Iannacone
Eden Ingate
Danielle Mathis
Remy Adrian
Courtney Henry
Sierra Nylund
Carson Par
All Mac Walsh
Colin Weller
Dylan Vinson

8th - S. Massey
Brett Palmer
Cristel Ruiz-Frias
Felipe Ruiz-Frias
Troy Vinson

9th - Carla Harris
Middle School Resource Teacher, accompanied students to the media center to see the new selection of books.

10th Grade
Jose Feria
Amy Fogle
Elizabeth Gordon
Ben Kennedy
Bevan Schiffli

11th Grade
Aaron Burton
Eli Dryman
Rachael Hedden
Charles Pair
Olen Schiffli

12th Grade
Caden Brown
Alex Hedden

... REPORT CARD continued from page 1

was 22 in Kindergarten, 21 in 1st Grade, 17 in 2nd Grade, 19 in 3rd Grade, 15 in 4th Grade, 25 in 5th Grade, 16 in 6th Grade, 11 in 7th Grade and 17 in 8th Grade. These figures are per classroom.

The average course size for high school classes was 17 for English 1, 16 for Algebra 1, 17 for Algebra II, 20 for Geometry, 12 for Biology, 11 for Chemistry and 9 for Physical Science.

The percentage of students’ scores at or above grade level for each grade level’s ABCs end-of-grade tests were in 3rd grade reading 68.3% and greater than 95% in math; in 4th grade reading 56.3% and 68.8% in math; in 5th grade reading 80.8% in reading and 73.1% in math; in 6th grade reading 70.6% and 82.4% in math; in 7th grade 51.9% in reading and 59.3% in math; in 8th grade reading 72.7% and 81.8% in math. Overall 66.5% were above grade level in reading and 78.4% were above grade level in math.

Except for 4th grade reading and math, and 7th grade math, Highlands School students above grade percentiles were higher than both district and state levels. District wide 4th grade reading was 81.3% and state was 59.2% and math was 76.4%. District wide and 72.8% state wide compared to Highlands’ 56.3% and 68.8%, respectively.

For 7th grade math, district figures were 61.2% and state figures were 67.3% compared to Highlands’ 59.3%.

At the high school level, students scores for math at or above grade level in math were lower than both district and state scores in Algebra I, Algebra II and Geometry. Highlands’ Algebra I score was 66.7% compared to district and state at 77.9% and 69%, respectively.

For Algebra II it was 63.2% compared to districts of 68.7% and 67.2%, respectively. For Geometry it was 40% compared to 74.2% and 67.9%, respectively.

In English, Biology, Chemistry, Civics & Economics and U.S. History Highlands

• See REPORT CARD page 16
Club performs weekly service projects in Highlands

On Friday, Jan. 20, members of The Girls’ Clubhouse worked at the Highlands Emergency Council on Poplar Street, packing boxes of food for the families which the council serves each week. Upstairs the girls worked organizing the clothes, shoes and toys donated to the organization. Recipients can rummage through donations to find articles they can use. To find out more about the Emergency Council, call 526-4357. Above from left are Veronica Garcia, Ivy Satterwhite, McKinley Mosely, Elizabeth Houston, Grace Brassard and Meredith Garren. The girls are in the sixth grade at Highlands School.

WCU to host ‘Buying a home in today’s market’

Western Carolina University will host “Buying a Home in Today’s Market,” presented by Western Carolina Properties and Macon Bank, at 6 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 17, in Room 143 of the Cordelia Camp Building.

The workshop is designed to help area residents understand the current housing and lending markets. Participants will learn about the availability of loans, how much to borrow to buy a home, programs for first-time homebuyers and other information about purchasing a home in the current economic situation.

“There are a variety of loan programs currently available to assist most buyers with their real estate purchase,” said Rick Kirkpatrick, vice president of Macon Bank. “It is important to understand the process and qualifications for these different programs in order to find the most appropriate option.”

Participants also will learn what questions to ask a real estate agent or lenders in order to make informed decisions about homeownership.

The program is free, but preregistration is required. Online registration is available at http://learn.wcu.edu or by calling Susan Fouts, WCU’s director of continuing education, at (828) 928-4968 or (828) 227-3688.
April 24 there’s a good chance the money will be earmarked, and though it will come to Highlands through the Army Corps of Engineers, there’s a good chance it will come.

He said the federal government wants to use organizations that are currently in existence, hence the Army Corps of Engineers.

Even if Highlands doesn’t get everything on its “wish list” there are zero percent, 20-year loans available as well as grant money for infrastructure projects, he said.

Nix also discussed upgrade to the town water lines, specifically on Big Bear Pen, Split Rail, Mirror Lake and along N.C. 28.

“Basically, the town’s system is in good shape, but some improvements are necessary and should probably be done over the next five years,” he said.

Improvements mostly involve increased water flow via larger pipes – changing old two-inch pipes to four- and six-inch pipes.

Radio read water and Electric Fund Projects

Fatland suggested the town change its meter system to radio read meters to both save the town man-hours and to ensure accurate readings by eliminating human error.

“Right now we have two meter readers which could be decreased to one so we could move one person to another department. The radio readers cut read time to 1/10 to 1/12 time and will actually add to information to the read because it is more accurate,” he said.

He and Nix said the radio water meters detect leaks in buildings and in the town’s system which will cut down on water consumption saving consumers money.

“This will help customers locate and fix leaks in their homes and enable us to fix leaks in the town’s system,” said Nix.

Fatland said when the town of Tryon switched to radio read meters, he eliminated 48% loss of water in the system. He said the additional cost to consumers to offset the town was to install the new meters which would be minimal – about $1,596.50.

The town has about 2,500 water customers and 3,000 electric customers. The radio read electric meters are so sensitive they pick up the electric flow from the light on the VCR or DVD player. This will likely mean electric bills will be higher; bad for the customer and good for the town.

Commissioner Patterson said people may want to adjust by installing a multi-strip “on-off” switch.

GIS Technician Matt Shuler updated the board on the police replacement plan. He said he’s in the process of mapping the last 700 poles of the 2,800 in the plant with 15% of them changed out and 287 left to change. He said Northland has been very cooperative, as he’s in the process of mapping the last 700.

“Right now we have two meter readers which could be decreased to one so we could move one person to another department. The radio readers cut read time to 1/10 to 1/12 time and will actually add to information to the read because it is more accurate,” he said.

He and Nix said the radio water meters detect leaks in buildings and in the town’s system which will cut down on water consumption saving consumers money.

“... WORKSESSION continued from page 11

in the Unified Development Code now in progress because including it would take drastic rewriting rather than melding into the UDO as is the case with the town’s other ordinances – land use, subdivision and zoning.

Since the Stormwater Ordinance would mostly affect developers, Commissioner Ross urged the board to get the ordinance in effect as soon as possible. “This would protect the environment and could be a revenue source to the town, as well,” he said.

Fatland said impact fees could be assessed once an stormwater ordinance is in affect. “The town could generate $400,000 a year with a $10 fee or $250,000 with a $6 fee.”

Raising the Harris Lake Bridge was also discussed and all elevated flooding in the area and fell under the “stormwater projects” category. Nix encouraged it be done and said town crews could do it address, 1-2, 3, and 10-year floods.

General Fund Projects

The ABC store in relation to freeing up space for the Police Department was discussed at length. Fatland said the ABC board hasn’t signed a lease yet with Margaret O’Donnell of Highlands Plaza but that a project engineer has been hired to help design the space – to be between 4,800 and 6,000 square feet.

The Police Department could then move into the 3,000 square feet vacated by the ABC store which Fatland said could happen within three months.

He said there were USDA grants available for both Town Hall and Police Department facilities. The board agreed the Town Hall plan had to be redone due to the economy and the fact that the Police Department no longer needs to occupy the Town Hall space. In both cases, Fatland said the town should go as “green” as possible because it’s a plus when it comes to certain funding.

Police Chief Bill Harrell said the renovated ABC building would be adequate for his department for the next 20 years.

A town-wide security system was also discussed, so all town buildings and facilities – including the sewer and water plants could be monitored via video.

Shuler, who has become the town’s IT guy in addition to the GIS Technician, suggested changing the town’s cell phone provider to AT&T to enable better coverage and to save the town money – about $200 a month.

Equipment Replacement and Financing

Fatland said he is going over all the town’s equipment and vehicles to ensure everything is kept up to date while being fiscally responsible. He also discussed funding policies to reflect a pay-as-you-go mentality, the use of capital reserves, grants, federal stimulus funds and loans. He said there are a lot of options for the town.

Solid Waste

Fatland said there is a trend in North Carolina to make solid waste departments self-sufficient like electric and water departments. “The idea is to take Solid Waste out of the General Fund and make it operate like an Enterprise Fund,” he said. “This means increasing user fees to maintain the department.”

He also discussed initiating a town curb-side recycle program like the one being run by Benjamin Wood who charges $15 month to pick up recyclables.

Commissioner Dennis DeWolf said the town should wait and see how Wood’s enterprise goes before the town takes it on.

Personnel Administration & Employee Benefits

Fatland stressed the importance of an updated employee handbook which in the long run will lower the town’s insurance rates. He suggested involving employees in each department to go over the current manual page by page to revamp it. He thinks the project can be completed by June.

Employees have requested health savings accounts be set up to help with potential medical bills. He said the medical insurance plan the town offers employees gives the town a competitive edge and should be maintained if possible.

Commissioner Amy Patterson asked that the Town Hall stay open during lunch so citizens can conduct business during their lunch hours. Fatland said he would discuss staggering lunch hours.

Fatland suggested not purchasing new equipment or hiring any full time employees at this time, but rather to use part-time people where needed, specifically a part-time CPA and IT person to allow Shuler of that job so he can concentrate on the GIS job he was hired to do.

Recreation

Recreation Director Selwyn Chalker said the trend in North Carolina was to move away from providing programs for citizens but to “rather supply specific facilities,” he said. (See Survey on page 11).

The use of grant money was discussed to upgrade the Rec Park facilities, perhaps incorporate new items – like an indoor, year-round swimming pool. Fatland said grant money was available through PARF and other sources.

Commissioners DeWolf stressed the need for a master plan for the Rec Park so it will accommodate needs and wants of the citizens into the future. “We need to have some idea about what we want to do with this property,” he said. “What year-round activities are wanted and what facilities are needed to accommodate them? Those are answers we want to know.”

Other Items

Commissioner Hank Ross said the recently completed parking study has put Main Street streetscape plans hold until the configuration of parking spaces is finalized.

Commissioners agreed that the public restrooms by the Town Hall needed a serious overhaul to include a baby-changing station.

Police Chief Harrell suggested keeping dogs off Main Street during Halloween due to dog fights and biting that occurred this year.

- Kim Lewicki

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Does your New Year resolution list look like this?

- Lose weight✓
- Quit smoking✓
- Attend church✓
- Work hard✓
- Oil Change✓
- New Tires✓
- Don’t procrastinate

We can help you wrap it up!

- Oil change✓
- Winterization✓
- Tune up✓
- Brakes✓
- Tires✓

Manley’s Auto & Towing

James “Popcorn” Hw 28 South
Manley
Owner/Operator

Channel 14
Highlands’ own TV channel!

Heart of the High Country
weekly show about Highlands

Mountain Home Showcase
home tours, design tips, and cooking classes

Visitor Information Program
hosted by Blackberry Bear

DVs of Heart of the High Country available at the Hudson Library and Movie Stop

Northland Cable Television
scored higher than both district and state levels. In Physical Science Highlands had higher percentages than other schools in the district but a little lower than statewide percentages. In Physical Science Highlands percent age was 57.9 compared to 49.2 in the district and 58.4 in the state.

Each year, schools in North Carolina may receive several designations based on their performance on the state’s ABCs tests. These designations are awarded on the basis of the percentage of students performing at grade level and on whether students have learned as much as they are expected to learn in one year.

Highlands School rated as a “School of Progress” where at least 60% of the students are at grade level which means the school earned expected growth. North Carolina has set target goals that schools must meet to make Adequately Programmed (APP) as mandated by the Federal “No Child Left Behind Act. Highlands met 13 out of the 13 APP targets.

Highlands School teachers were also rated.

In the 2007-2008 school year, there were 33 classroom teachers of which 100% are fully licensed, so 98% of Highlands School classes are taught by “highly qualified teachers.” 24% of Highlands School teachers have advanced degrees, five who were Nationally Board Certified (there are more now).

On teaching experience, 67% have taught 10 years or more, 24% have taught 6-10 years and 9% have taught 0-3 years. The teacher turnover rate at Highlands School is the same as the state at 12%. District wise it’s 14%. Highlands has the highest number of 10+ year teachers compared to the district and the state.

The report card includes information about school and student performance, class sizes, attendance, school safety, instructional resources, and teacher quality. Report card data will be available for each school, for each school district and for the state education system as a whole. “The Macon County School System continues to perform around the state average in most academic areas,” said Macon County School Superintendent Dan Briggs.

Fred’s words appreciated by firefighters nationwide

Dear Editor,

Please allow my familiarity as I read your column in Highlands Newspaper each week via the internet. It is one of the highlights of my week and usually I chuckle and go on but today I must thank you for your column in the Jan. 29 issue entitled “Are Firefighters Crazy or What?”

Yes, we are a different breed, but so are all emergency services personnel.

I retired last year after 35 years as a volunteer firefighter in a small southern Tennessee town. I know and appreciate the work the men at the Highlands Fire & Rescue Department perform. I can only imagine the difficulties they encounter in the mountain terrain of those beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains.

You are exactly right about the lack of recognition they receive for their hours of training and service. Properly implemented, a full-time fire department can pay dividends in reduced fire losses and reduced insurance premiums to any town but particularly an area such as Highlands with its high-value homes.

Thanks for recognizing these public servants. I too have firefighter sons who are paramedics and EMT trained. They would do nothing else.

Walter Sloan
Fayetteville, TN

P.S. - No firefighter in his right mind would strap on a badge and gun and walk up on a car with tinted windows on a dark street. We think cops are nuts.

... REPORT CARDS continued from page 13

... LETTERS continued from page 2

ism has been written about this gentleman’s doings and un-doings that it may not be long before we hear about the doings and undoings that it may. As to teaching experience, 67% have taught 10 years or more, 24% have taught 6-10 years and 9% have taught 0-3 years. The teacher turnover rate at Highlands School is the same as the state at 12%. District wise it’s 14%. Highlands has the highest number of 10+ year teachers compared to the district and the state.

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Rare opportunity to spend an evening with a yogi

Yogi Amrit Desai, internationally renowned yoga master, lecturer and author, will give a lecture and Q&A during a workshop on Sunday, February 8 at 3 p.m. at the Albert Carlton-Cashiers Community Library, 249 Frank Allen Road in Cashiers.

Yogi Desai founded the Kriyāpā Yoga Center in Lennox, Massachusetts, the largest such center in the U.S. and the Amrit Yoga Institute in Salt Springs, Fla. He has received numerous honors and awards internationally, including from the World Religious Parliament in New Delhi. He is the author of numerous books, including his collection of poetry. His presence in Cashiers is a rare opportunity to learn directly from a true master of yoga. Heshareshis wisdom with warmth and humor. An evening with Gurudev, as he is fondly known, is truly an experience. Even those who have never attended a yogadass or considered meditation are touched by his calm and peaceful presence, and by his profound teachings.

For registration, please contact April Harrison, at 828-743-1124, or email adhnc@yahoo.com. The cost for the lecture is $35. Gurudev’s books and CDs will be available and may also be purchased at the event.

On-going Events

• The Bascom is offering a host of art classes for preschoolers to pre-teens from now through the end of the school year. For more information, call (828) 526-4949, ext. 0.

• 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 828-526-9938 (ext 258).

• Collections for men and women overseas at Chestnut Hill Retirement community. A wide variety of items currently is needed, including books and magazines, CDs and DVDs, and small pocket books, which fit neatly in the BDUs (Battle Dress Uniforms). The drop point for all items will be under the flagpole at the Chestnut Hill Clubhouse on Clubhouse Trail. For any questions, or to schedule a drop-off call (828) 877-2114.

• Refuge Youth meets every Sun. night at 6:30 in the fellowship hall. The meeting starts at 7 p.m. For more info call youth ministers Matt and Candace Woodroof at 828-369-7540 ext 203.

• Raffle of handcrafted Stiefel Botanical Book to Benefit The Bascom. To purchase a raffle ticket, call (828) 787-2114.

• UPCA Upcoming Events •

• UPCOMING EVENTS •

Fred’s words appreciated by firefighters nationwide

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Thanks for recognizing these public servants. I too, have firefighter sons who are paramedics and EMT trained. They would do nothing else.

Walter Sloan
Fayetteville, TN

P.S. - No firefighter in his right mind would strap on a badge and gun and walk up on a car with tinted windows on a dark street. We think cops are nuts.

... REPORT CARDS continued from page 13

... LETTERS continued from page 2

ism has been written about this gentleman’s doings and un-doings that it may not be long before we hear about the dedication of The Carter Library of Global Fol

ies. Using this man’s book as a source for unbiased research is a key to looking to Hollywood for historical accuracy. Grinding right along then we are then at “The ASPHYXIA State,” Anti-Semitic Political Hack Yaring Xenophobia in Arabia.

In the conclusion of her article, Ms Brugger quotes from part of President Obama’s inaugural speech where he said “…we cannot but believe that the old hatreds shall someday pass…” that the line of tribe shall soon dissolve.”

What a pity! Ms Brugger did not believe in these words. If she had, she would not have written an article focusing on the negative aspects of a particular race of people.

We should never close the door on history, but equally, we should never shut ourselves in the gutter of “the old hatreds,” by using a pejorative acronym like WASP. For when we do, we end up with “The BACTERIAL State,” Ignored Article Condoning Terroristic Enterprises Rich In Artistic License.

Bernie Coulson
Highlands

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UPCOMING EVENTS

• Study sessions at the Universal Unitarian Fellowship Hall in Franklin. A $5 soup-supper will be served at 5:30 p.m. Study sessions will begin at 6:30 p.m. For more information call 828-524-6777 or 706-746-9964.

Thursdays
• Ali-Ain meeting, noon at the Episcopal Church on Main and Fifth streets.
• The local affiliate of NAAM LC (National Alliance on Mental Illness), NAMI Appalachian South, meets from 7-9 p.m. at the Family Restoration Center, 1095 Wiley Brown Road, Franklin. NAMI offers peer support, education, and advocacy for individuals suffering from serious mental illness and their families and loved ones. Contact Ann Nandrea 369-7385, Carole Light 524-9769 or Mary Ann Widenhouse 524-1355 for more information.

Thursdays & Fridays
• Live music at The Rib Shack from 7-10 p.m. 2nd & 4th Fridays.
• Community Drum Circle at the Highlands Rec Park, from 6:30-7 p.m. come experience a fun family friendly drum circle. All ages are encouraged to attend this free event. All experience levels welcomed. Celebrate community with facilitated interactive rhythmic dialogue. Bring your own drum or percussion instrument. Some extra drums and percussion will be supplied. For more information call 421-0551.

Thursday, Feb. 5
• A meeting will be held today at the Macon County Public Library beginning at 5:30 p.m. to begin planning and organization for the Quilt Trails project in Macon County. Barbara Webster, executive director of Quilt Trails of Western North Carolina, will give an informative and interesting presentation about the economic impact this project has had in other Western North Carolina counties. Anyone interested in this project is invited to attend this important and informative meeting. For more information call Linda Harbuck at 524-3161 or Deb Thompson-Heathry at 349-8912.

• NC Cooperative Extension will hold a class on “Growing Shiitake Mushrooms” from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Macon County Environmental Resource Center. Pre-registration is required and there is a $10 fee due at registration. Each participant should bring two hardwood logs (oak is preferred), 4 to 6 inches in diameter and 3 to 4 feet long. This will be a hands-on workshop. A classroom session will explain Shiitake growing and participants will then drill their logs and inoculate them with Shiitake mushroom “seed.” Particpants will leave the class with two inoculated Shiitake logs and the ability to inoculate more. The program is geared toward those who want to grow shiitake as a serious hobby or small sideline business. Most of the program will be outside, so dress warmly. If you have an extra log to donate, we would like to build a Shiitake demonstration area at the Environmental Resource Center. Please register at the Macon County Cooperative Extension Center by Friday, January 30. Call 349-2046 if you have any questions.

• Carole Light, PhD, will be presenting a program “Concerns and Beliefs about Money and Their Effect on our Mental Health.” Money is a great source of conflict for many people and in many relationships. This program is not about how to manage money. Carole will explore some of the things that shape our attitudes and reactions to money issues, and help us gain insight into why we behave and react the way we do. A support group meeting will follow at 8 p.m. Please invite family and friends, as this is open to the public and should be of interest to anyone. This will be held at The Children’s Home, 827 Wiley Brown Road. Turn off Hwy. 441 onto Dowdle Mtn. Road at the traffic light (Near Texaco Station) Turn right for short distance and then turn right on first black top road (Wiley Brown). This is narrow, crooked road so be careful. About 1/2 mile, you will see a sign “Children’s Home” on your right and large building a bit off the road.

• “Sleepless in Seattle.” 1993 rated PG, features Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan. In the story, the son of a recently widowed man calls a radio talk show in an attempt to find his father a partner. There is a very romantic ending on the top of the Empire State Building. The movies will be shown in the Library Meeting Room at 7 p.m. The movies and popcorn are free, but donations are appreciated. Movies are among the many services provided to the community by the Friends of the Library.

The Macon County Soccer Club (http://www.macasonsoccer.net) will begin accepting registrations for the Spring soccer season on Saturday, from 6-8 p.m. at the Macon County Community Building in Franklin and the Highlands Recreation Park. Parents are encouraged to print out the registration form online and bring it with them to the registration. Children age 4 and up are welcome and will be placed on teams according to age. The registration fee is $45 for players returning from the fall season and $55 for new registrations. The registration fee covers uniform (jersey, shorts and socks), state registration and referee fees. A $5 discount is available for siblings. All new players must provide a photocopy of their birth certificate at the time of registration. The deadline for registering for the Spring season is February 21st. Registrations received after February 21st will incur a $10 late fee and players will be placed on a wait list. Every effort will be made to place late registrants on a team. However, we cannot guarantee placement on a team before the first game.

For more information visit http://www.macasonsoccer.net or call Michelle Thornton at 828-349-4399.

Friday, Feb. 6
• High Mountain Squares will dance this Friday night at the Macon County Community Building from 7-9 p.m. Rudy Saunders from Monroe, GA will be the caller. We dance Western Style Square Dancing, mainstream and plus levels. Everyone is welcome. For information call 828-349-0965, 828-349-4187, 706-762-0843, or www.highmountainsquares.org

Saturday, Feb. 7
• NANGALAHI HIKING CLUB will take a strenuous 10.4 mile hike on the Chunky Girl Trail with elevation gain of 921 feet in a steady climb to the Appalachian Trail. Meet in Franklin at Westgate Plaza (opposite Burger King) at 9 a.m. Drive 34 miles round trip.

Call leader Bill Van Horn, 369-1983, for reservations. Bring water, lunch, wear sturdy shoes.

Visitors are welcome, but no pets please.

Sundays, Feb. 8 & 15
• Cullasaja Assembly of God’s youth ministry, “Refuge Youth” will be doing a “Relationship Series” Sunday night after Feb. 8 and the 15 starting at 6:30 p.m. This is for students in grades 6th-12th. This will be a fun series with awesome games, gives away and great food! Topics to be covered will be from Relationships with God, each other and dating. This will change your life. Call or email Youth Pastors Matt and Candace Woodroof with any questions at 828-369-7540 ext. 203, twoodroof@agchurches.org. Cullasaja Assembly is located at 6201 Highlands Rd. next to Exxon. www.cullasajaas.org

Saturday, Feb. 8
• A wellness and Yoga Nidra meditation experience with Yogi Desai at the Albert Carlton – Cashiers Community Library, Grouse Point Road, Cashiers at 5:30 p.m. Lecture and yoga Nidra Meditation Experience - $25 for registration and information, please contact April Harrison, (929-743-1124) or email adhinc@yahoo.com. There will be a yoga session for those who would like to participate at 4 p.m., prior to the lecture. This yoga experience is free and suitable for beginners.

Thursday, Feb. 12
• Open House Night at Creative Images at Falls on Main from 5:30-7:30. Featuring finger foods, punch, door prizes and a 35% OFF SALE on all products and a 50% OFF JEWELRY SALE.

The League of Women Voters of Macon County will sponsor a program featuring R.E.A.C.H. director, Ann VanHarlingen. Van Harlingen will discuss their programs and facilities relating to domestic violence — Resources, Education, Assistance, Counseling, and Healing. R.E.A.C.H. has been serving our community since 1980. Learn how you can help — volunteers give more than 5000 hours per year! The program will be held at Tartan Hall of the First Presbyterian Church in Franklin. Lunch is available by reservation — call 524-5192. The program will begin at 12:15. The public is invited.

• The February meeting of The Western North Carolina Woodworkers Club will meet on Thursday at 6 p.m. at the Blue Ridge School, in Glenville. Drive around to the back of the school to the woodworking shop. Visitors are always welcomed. The club meets every second Thursday at the Blue Ridge School at 6 p.m. November through March and 7 p.m. April through October. Listen to WHLC (104.5 FM) at 5 p.m. for cancellation due to weather.

• Becky Lipkin, well known local herbalist, will present a program at the Jackson County Public Library entitled “Create a Cupid’s Cupboard” Thursday at 6:30 p.m. Becky will show participants how to make a variety of unique and personal bath and body herbal products. Participants will make and take home a variety of passion products including massage and body oils, along with bath and foot soaks. Many luscious recipes will be included in handout information. This program is free. For further information, please contact Edith Peden at 828-666-2016.

Saturday, Feb. 14
• NANTAHALA HIKING CLUB will take a 6-mile moderate hike with a gradual elevation change of 800 feet in Panthertown Valley, passing several waterfalls and climbing Little Green Mountain. Meet at the Wachovia Bank in Cashiers (in back) at 8:30 a.m. Bring water, a lunch, and wear sturdy shoes. Drive 14 miles round trip.

Call leader Walter Taylor, 743-6977, for reservations. Visitors are welcome but no pets please.

• NANTAHALA HIKING CLUB will take an easy-to-moderate 5-mile hike from Park Creek to Park Ridge, returning to Standing Indian Campground. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin (across from Burger King) at 9:30 a.m. Bring a drink, lunch, and wear sturdy shoes. Drive 25 miles round trip.

See EVENTS page 22

Ruby Cinema

Hwy. 441, Franklin • 524-2076
Feb. 6-12

THE PINK PANTHER 2
rated PG
Friday: (4:10), 7, 9:10
Sat & Sun: (2), (4:10), 7, 9:10
Mon – Thurs: (4:10), 7

VALKYRIE
rated PG-13
Friday: (4:20), 7, 9:20
Sat & Sun: (2:10), (4:20), 7, 9:20
Mon – Thurs: (4:20), 7:10

TAKEN
rated PG-13
Friday: (4:15), 7, 9:15
Sat & Sun: (2:10), (4:15), 7, 9:15
Mon – Thurs: (4:15), 7:10

GRAN TORINO
rated R
Friday: 7:05, 9:20
Sat & Sun: 7:05, 9:20
Mon – Thurs: 7:05

HOTEL FOR DOGS
rated PG
Friday: (4:20)
Sat & Sun: (2:05), (4:20)
Mon – Thurs: (4:20)
Furnished 3bd/2bath house in Mirror Lake area available for 6-12 month lease $1200+ utilities. Call 770-977-5692.

3br, 2ba cottage near Mirror Lake – In town. $1250 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 526-1084.

Vacation Rental

Highlands Country Club – Sorry, golf and club privileges not available. $2,495 a week. Call 912-230-7202.
The Lodge on Mirror Lake – Fish or canoe from deck. Available weekly, monthly, No min. Call 828-342-2302.

Items for Sale


Honey for Sale – Blue Valley honey, perfect amber color, 3/4 lb. bears, $5 each. work in town. Call Bruce at 526-9201.


GE Profile White Countertop Gas Range with Downdraft. Like new. $185. Call 787-2232.

Kolcraft Jeep Wagoner Tandem Double Stroller Used rarely. Basically brand new. $100 or OBO. Call 526-2536.

125-gallon All-Glass Aquarium – over 6 feet in length, was a salt-water shark-only tank. Comes with Ethem Pro series-2 external canister filter, and optional mahogany base. Will settle for $500; base, extras and help moving it are optional but free. Call cell 828-342-2809.

Dry, hardwood, Firewood – Priced to Sell! Call 828-526-4946 or 828-200-0268.

Small, Emerald and Gold Ring. Originally $300 Asking $175. 828-631-2675 after 5 p.m. Sylva area.

Baby Lock Serger Machine with extra spools of thread. $200.00 828-631-2675 after 5 p.m. Sylva area.

Red Wicker Chaise Lounge with pad. $250. Call 526-5056.


Craftsman 10” radial arm saw with stand. Old but used very little. Excellent working condition. $150. 828-787-2177.

Hewlett Packard 19” CRT Monitor in good working condition with all connection cord in-
CLASSIFIEDS

HIGH SCHOOL DUAL CREDIT - set of 12 Sherbert Goblets, and dessert plates. $35. Call 526-4063.
WATER PURIFYING CHLORINATOR PUMP
with large heavy duty plastic holding tank. Was $75. Now $50. Call Randy at 828-488-2193.
PLASTIC OUTDOOR TABLE: Hunter green 36"x36" in like new condition. $10. Call Randy at 828-488-2193.
DECK CHAIR WITH MATCHING FOOT RESTS - $20. Call 526-5367.
DRESSING MIRROR - $5. Call 526-5367.
STEEL TYPEWRITER TABLE - $5. Call 526-5367.
TWO TWIN CREAM COLORED BEDSPREADS - $6 each. Call 526-5367.
3-TIERED GLASS CORNER SHELF $10. Call 526-5367.
TWO ELECTRIC WATER COOLERS for sale. Approximately 38” tall x 12” square. Put bottled water on top. $50 each. OBO. Call 526-3262.
FREE BRICK FRONT FOR BUILT-IN FIREPLACE W-68",H-52" Call 828-349-3320
LENOX SPICE JARS. Set, Tea set/ rice bowls 369-0498 7-9 p.m.
LENOX GIRL PLACE SET. Tea set/ rice bowls 369-0498 7-9 p.m.
LENOX GEISHA GIRL Place SET. Tea set/ rice bowls 369-0498 7-9 p.m.
GEISHA GIRL NIPPON TEA POT. Rattan rails handle circa 1891-1921, Creamer/Covered Sugar Pot. Value at $265 each. Call 706-982-2254.
THREE “HOUSE OF DENMARK” BOOKCASES – walnut, 3' x 6', containing TV, tape player, small side table, etc. $5 each.
MISC ITEMS – Various proof coin sets, old 78 years serving Highlands area. 828-526-2251.
THREE HOUSE OF DENMARK BOOKCASES – walnut, 3' x 6', containing TV, tape player, small side table, etc. $5 each.
LORI LUCAS – Housekeeper, cleaning. $15 an hour. Call 828-200-9249 or 526-8525.
MASSEY FERGUSON DIESEL DELUXE 35 WITH POWER STEERING, completely rebuilt, re-painted, new tires. Includes scrape blade, and an 8,000 lbs. tandem axle trailer. Sharp Package! $6,000.
ANTIQUE CHERRY DINING TABLE – drop-leaf, rope carved legs. Seats 4-10 people. $1,500 obo 828-787-1515.

VEHICLES FOR SALE

1999 JEEP CJ7 – Rebuilt 304, 10,000 miles. 8 CY, 4 SP, 4WD, Front Bush Guard. 35” tires. 6’ lift.
Headers. Good condition. $8,500. OBO. Call 526-3824.
02 DUTCHEMEN 27’ LITE TRAVEL TRAILER – Slideout. Queen MBR, sleeps 6. $12,000. OBO. Call 526-3824.
15-FT. DUAL AXLE TRAILER FOR HAULING TRACTORS – Worth $750. OBO. Call 526-3824.

SERVICES

DEPENDABLE PET SITTER, HOUSE SITTER, AND LICENSED CNA – References available. Located in Otte, NC. Call 443-315-9547. 2/5
CLEAN NOT CLEAN ENOUGH? – Call Details Home Service. 828-342-8853 3/5
START YOUR OWN INTERNET BUSINESS – today! Learn in a step-by-step way from a professional Internet marketer. Test the courses with the FREE VIDEOS on www.websteachinghomeebies.com. Email questions to: sales@successfulnewbie.com 2/18
COMPLETE HOME MANAGEMENT & PERSONAL CARE FOR YOUR LOVED ONE – Possible Live-In. Call Mrs. Myers. 828-349-3479 or 824-321-1003 1/29
WILL BABY SIT IN YOUR HOME. Have own transportation. Call Carly at 526-3824 or 828-200-9101.
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 Hospitals. 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.
HOUSEKEEPING – Saturday and Sunday mornings. Call Kim at 828-482-2105.
LANDSCAPE CLEANUP – leaves, gutters and more. Call Juan at 200-9249 or 526-8525.
COMPLETE LAWN SERVICE – All Levels of Lawn Care at Competitive Rates. Design, Installation, & Maintenance. No Job Too Small or Too Large. 30 Years Experience. For Free Quotes, Referenc- es, or Scheduling, Please Call 526-1684.
CLOCK REPAIR – Antique or modern, complicated antique clocks are my specialty. Experienced and dependable with housecalls available. Call 706-754-9631 or visit my website at www.oldclockrepair.com. Joseph MacGhee, Clockmaker.
FIREWOOD “Nature Dried” Call 526-2251.
J&J LAWN AND LANDSCAPING SERVICES – total lawn care and landscaping company. 20 years serving Highlands area. 828-200-2251.
HIGHLANDS SHUTTLE SERVICE – Atlanta Airport Shuttle. Drive - Away • Auto Delivery. All Out-Of-Town Trips Driving Services. Call 526-8078.

... REPORT CARD continued from page 16

... MOTHER NATURE continued from page 1

we’re having to be careful about overloads. The town’s electric system is divided into two circuits – but it wasn’t the circuit along the perimeter of the Franklin Road north to the end of town that was hit hardest, said Nix.
Crews worked into the afternoon, slowly reactivating lines but every now and then the power flicked off and then on again.
“We are fortunate to have our own electric utility department to restore power,” said Town Manager Jim Fatland.
Nix said though the outage wasn’t technically weather induced, Duke won’t know for sure what caused the piece of equipment to malfunction. It could have been due to cold temperatures or an overload. No one knows at this time. “They will have to investigate that,” said Nix.
Since Highlands retransmits its power from Duke Power, the town is often held hostage when something goes wrong on

Highlands Town Planner and Zoning Administrator Joe Cooley joined Macon County Commissioners, the county planning staff and board at its retreat on Friday, Jan. 30 at the Mill Creek Country Club in Franklin. Cooley explained how the Macon County Building Department and the Town of Highlands cooperate on construction inspections and explained how Highlands is preparing the Unified Development Ordinance as a means to updating Highlands’ comprehensive plan in the next year or so.

... REPORT CARD continued from page 16

man. “We have continuing challenges ahead of us to effectively meet the changing demands of dual accountability models. As we review the 2007-08 District Report Card, several areas demonstrating improvement emerge such as the four-year cohort graduation rate, reduction of the dropout rate, gate- way science and overall math achievement in grades 3-8.”
Brigman said the school board has estab- lished priorities for the current academic year to address key areas for improvement including reading, chemistry, physical sci- ence, physics and U.S. History.
“Attendance continues to be an additional area of concern throughout the school district; as we reach out in partnership to parents, guardians and community members to ensure every student attends school every day. Working together, we will successfully reach all required benchmarks under No Child Left Behind and the North Carolina ABCs accountability models,” he said.
For additional information regarding the Macon County Shool district report card and local improvement efforts, please contact Central Services or your child’s school. The NC School Report Card website is http://www.ncreportcards.org/src/ - Kim Lewicki

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Duke's end.
Due to the cold and icy roads, school was called off in Macon County and the High- lands Town Board cancelled its Wednesday night meeting, rescheduling it for Wed., Feb. 11, at 7 p.m. at the Community Building.
“Since the Zoning Board is meeting at Town Hall at 5:30 p.m. on Feb. 11th and the meeting had been previously noticed it can’t be moved to another location,” said Town Manager Jim Fatland.
With modern comforts, it’s easy to be- come complacent in the winter, even in 2009 in the mountains. “But it’s important to always be prepared for things like this to happen in this kind of weather and always have a backup plan,” said Nix.
Backup plans might include firewood, kerosene heaters and generators. Highlands’ Newspaper got a chance to use its backup generator system. The computers, real-time weather and webcams all remained up and running. - Kim Lewicki
Anyone interested in working in New Orleans with the Highlands United Methodist Church March 27 to April 2 should call Robbie Forrester at 342-1627 for details.
The following are the Highlands Police Dept. log entries for Jan. 16-26. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor, or public officials have been used.

Jan. 16
- At 9:10 p.m., officers were called to a residence on Azalea Circle where a break-in and entering had occurred. Nothing was stolen.

Jan. 21
- At 8:52 p.m., officers responded to a call of a drunk and disorderly conduct by a guest at the Hampton Inn.

Jan. 26
- At 2:30 p.m., officers on patrol smelled burning marijuana coming from the path between Fifth Street and the Hudson Library. When they entered the path four people, three of the juveniles, ran from the scene dropping a cellphone and a Russian nesting doll. Inside the doll was what appeared to be marijuana remnants and ashes. Later arrested, was Parker Ross Schultz, 19, in the vicinity of . . . on the Verandah for resisting, delaying and obstructing arrest. He was released on an unsecured $500 bond. His court hearing is set for Feb. 26 at 9 a.m.

- At 11:45 a.m., officers assisted ATF in its investigation of eight sticks of dynamite taken from Larry Rogers Construction Company.
- During the week, officers issued 10 citations.

Other Police News:
Dave Jellison, formerly a part-time employee at the Rec Park, now mans the desk at the police department so there is a person there at all times. Town Manager Jim Fatland said the transfer enables the Police Department to remain open to the public while officers are on patrol. “Since both the Recreation and Police Departments are funded by the General Fund, we can improve service without a budget increase,” he said.

The following are the Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries for the week of Jan. 27-Feb. 4.

Jan. 27
- The dept. responded to a two-vehicle accident on N.C. 28 south. The injured person was taken to the hospital.
- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at the Rec Park where a man had fallen during a basketball game. He was taken to the hospital.
- The dept. was first-responders to a residence on Hemlock Drive. The victim was transported to the hospital.
- The dept. responded to an alarm at a residence on Kinridge Lane set off by burning food.
- The dept. responded to a possible brush fire near Bust Your Butt Falls. It was a campfire.
- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Clubhouse Trail. The victim was transported to the hospital.

... THANK YOU from page 3

tended a warm welcome to each guest; a counter who kept numbers of age groups to facilitate next year’s shopping; a helper who dismantled and stored tables and stacked and stored chairs; a helper who cleaned the floor, leaving it spotless; one who laboriously cleaned the kitchen and dining room; one who dismantled nativity scene and other decorations; the generous person who donated $1,300 to help defray costs of the party; the media that featured articles on our event.

The staff of the International Friendship Center
• UPCOMING EVENTS •

**A proud grandpa**

Fred Wooldridge's granddaughters Christian rock band is rising to new heights and they are so proud of her and her fellow musicians. No money yet but, yet, says Fred, but in time, that will happen if this group stays together. They recently lost a Christian battle of the bands contest because of a microphone failure in the middle of a song. The judges told them they would have won otherwise.

**Benefit for Red Potts at the Highlands Rec Park**

**February 21 from 5-9 p.m.**

Food - Raffle - Auction and Cake Auction

Entertainment by the Dendy Family and the Oliver Rice and The Blue Ridge Mountain Band

**Wine, dine and solve the crime, Feb. 6 & 7 at PAC**

**Ronnie Spilton, Dean Zuch, Jim Gordon, Stuart Armor, Virginia Talbot and Mary Adair Leslie prepare for the upcoming “Final Reunion” Dinner Theater being presented by the Highlands Cashiers Players Friday and Saturday, February 6th & 7th at the Performing Arts Center (PAC) in Highlands. “Final Reunion is directed by Jody Read, founder of Carolina Murder Mysteries. The fun starts at 6:30 pm, for more information and tickets please call: 828-526-8084. Wine, dine and solve the crime!**
Thank you for coming on board
www.HighlandsInfo.com


Town Board Agenda – Wednesday, Feb. 11 – 7 p.m. at the Community Building

- Approve minutes of January 21 and January 29, 2009
- Public Comments
- Reports
  1. Mayor
  2. Committees
  3. Town Attorney
  4. Engineer/Public Services Administrator
  5. Police Chief
  6. Recreation Director
  7. Planner/Zoning Administrator
  8. Treasurer Report for Month Ended January 31, 2009
  9. Monthly Calendar
- 10. Grant Status Report
- 11. Town Manager

Old Business

New Business

- Annual Audit Contract for Year Ended June 30, 2009
- FY10 Budget Calendar
- Emergency Action Plan for Houston Dam
- Resolutions Authorizing Applications for Federal Funds
- Request to Close Pine Street for Chamber Music Concert
- Application for Preliminary and Final Plat Filed by Linda Parrish

Valentine’s Special!

- Bottle of wine
- Box of Argentine Chocolates
- Dozen Red Roses

“The Call for Special Pricing!”
The Falls on Main
526-5210
highlandswine@nctv.com

Valentine’s Day Headquarters!

- Featuring the new “Double Comb” AS SEEN ON TV!

Kilwin’s
Chocolates - Fudge - Ice Cream
Valentine’s Day Headquarters!
Chocolate Dipped Strawberries, Boxed Chocolates, Carmel Apples & More…
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