

Highlands' Newspaper

FREE

Volume 7, Number 3

PDF Version – www.HighlandsInfo.com

Thursday, Jan. 15, 2009

This Week in Highlands

- The Bascom is offering art classes for preschoolers to pre-teens. Call (828) 526-4949, ext. 0#.

- Friends of Panthertown work days, last Thursday of every month. Contact Nina Elliott at 828-526-9938 (ext 258).

- Collections for men and women overseas at Chestnut Hill Retirement community. To schedule a drop-off call (828) 787-2114.

- Raffle of handcrafted Stiefel Botanical Book to Benefit The Bascom. To purchase a raffle ticket, call 526-4949, ext. 8#.

- At Health Tracks various exercise classes. Call 828-526-1FIT.

Mon. & Wed.

- Middle School students After School Program from 3-5 p.m. at the Rec Park. Call 828.526.3556.

Mon., Wed., Fri.

- Step Aerobics with Tina Rogers at the Rec Park, 8-9 a.m. \$10 per class or \$50 a month.

Wed., & Fri.

- Open AA meeting noon at the Episcopal Church at Fifth and Main streets.

First Mondays

- The Hospital Auxiliary meets at 10 a.m. at the hospital.

Mondays

- Open AA meeting, 8 p.m. at the Episcopal Church at Fifth and Main streets.

- Recreational Bridge 1 p.m. at the Rec Park. \$3 per person.

Thursdays

- Al-Anon meeting, noon at the Episcopal Church on Main and Fifth streets.

Saturday, Jan. 17

- At Cyprus Restaurant, Zorki on acoustic guitar with Bill Coward on saxophone playing original music and classic covers at 9 p.m.

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 4.5 mile hike. Call leader Virginia Talbot for reservations, 526-4904.

Sunday, Jan. 18

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 2.2 mile hike. Call IKay Coriell, 369-6820.

Monday, Jan. 19

- The Mirror Lake Improvement Association meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the Highlands Civic Center.

Beginning Tuesday, Jan. 20

- A Bible study for young adult women meets at the Rodenbeck home from 5:45-7:30 p.m. The winter study will be "Stepping Up – A Journey Through the Psalms of Assent" by Beth Moore. Call Martha at 526-3606 for details.

Weekend Weather:

FRI	SAT	SUN
		
20-06F	29-15F	30-19F

K-4 School on hold; county cutting costs

At the six-hour Jan. 10 Macon County worksession, commissioners looked hard at the county budget to determine how well it will stand up against the dubious economic atmosphere of the nation.

Though adjustments will have to be made both to the current 2008-2009 budget and considerations made while preparing the upcoming 2009-2010 budget, things aren't as bad as they could be in Macon

County.

"Considering we have a \$47 million budget for the current fiscal year and will only be \$1.4 million short, we're not doing too badly," said County Manger Jack Horton.

The "short" is due to a slight decrease in revenues from sales tax, a substantial decrease in interest on investments, a slowdown in development, fewer new car sales, and a

slow-down in tax collections.

"Macon County has seen phenomenal growth in its tax base over the last decade – 10%-15% — but we don't expect growth to continue at the same level as previous years," said Horton. "Instead of adding \$215 million in growth, it will probably drop to \$100 million which still isn't that bad and represents a more normal 3%-5% increase."

• See COSTS page 19

AYPs indicate MC schools progress

For the last two months administrators have been prepping the Macon County School Board on AYP results and at the December board meeting they explained the meaning of scores and how they affect Macon County schools.

Macon County has two Title 1 schools that are on the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) watch list. (Title 1 schools are those that receive federal Title I funds to serve students who are economically disadvantaged.)

"This means they did not make AYP in at least one subgroup in 2008-2009," reads the report.

At East Franklin, the economically disadvantaged subgroup didn't make AYP in Reading. South Macon had four subgroups – all students, white, economically disadvantaged and students with disabilities – that didn't make AYP in math.

Since East Franklin didn't make AYP in Math it is a Sanction Level I school for math and offered public school choice as a sanction.

Title 1 schools that don't make AYP for two or more consecutive years in the same subject face sanctions under the federal law. These sanctions include offering public school choice, providing supplemental educational services at no cost to qualifying students and other measures.

• See PROGRESS page 11



A previous member and current members of The Girls' Clubhouse organized and stocked shelves at the Food Pantry on Friday, Jan. 9. The club of middle school girls performs community service projects each Friday afternoon. Pictured from left are McKinley Mosely, Veronica Garcia, Grace Brassard, Ivy Satterwhite, Meredith Garren, Megan Lewicki and Elizabeth Houston.

Photo by Kim Lewicki

Running the Food Pantry is a community effort

By Jan Lard

Members of the Girl's Clubhouse were a tremendous help stocking shelves in the Food Pantry on Friday, January 9. The girls

divided 200 pounds of pinto beans into two-cup portions, sorted boxes of donated fruit into baskets of grapefruit, oranges and tangerines,

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NC DOT faces budget cuts; explains service policy

Since late October, when winter weather hit western North Carolina, NC DOT has been fielding calls from citizens and municipalities about its road policy.

At the Monday, January 12 Macon County Commission meeting, Brian Burch, NC DOT District Manager, explained the reasons behind the perception that DOT has cut services after winter events.

"Budgetary cuts require that we pay closer adherence to our snow and ice policy than what has been practiced in the past," said Burch. "Currently, we can't provide that high level of service."

Burch said at Governor Bev Perdue's swearing in last Saturday, state departments were requested to be more transparent with the North Carolina citizenry. "So that's what I'm trying to do," Burch told commissioners.

Salt prices three times the regular price and a decrease in revenues from car sales are two reasons services have been cut by the NC DOT department this winter.

Burch said the state will adhere to its "bare road" policy on routes in the area that carry interstate commerce – interstate and four-lane North Carolina and U.S. roads.

• See NC DOT page 11

* THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• FORUM •

Transparent government



Kim Lewicki
Publisher

Across the nation and right here in Macon County, citizens are demanding transparency in government.

Well, the Macon County Commission has heeded the call and will be streaming its twice-monthly meetings live over the Internet with taped proceedings viewable via cable television or from the Macon County website.

At Monday night's meeting, the commission took Macon Funeral Home up on its free offer to film commission meetings and to link and stream them live from its website.

The company purchased the equipment and technology to film funeral services so families unable to attend funerals can watch them via its website.

With the technology in place, Larry Buchanan with the funeral home offered the service to the county. It's a go as soon as the county's IT people get with Buchanan.

Also on Monday night, the county renewed its franchise agreement with Mediacom, whose affiliate and major stockholder Morris Communications Company, LLC, has taken over the franchise for the cable system serving Macon, McDowell, Henderson and Jackson counties.

That means very soon, Morris Communications will be broadcasting the meetings filmed by Macon Funeral Home as part of its weekly programming.

By law through their franchise agreements with municipalities, cable television companies must offer municipalities a free channel for government programming.

Transparency will reign.

Often claiming misrepresentation by the press, now commissioners past and present can be assured that the citizenry will see exactly what goes on at meetings. "Things aren't always portrayed in the press the way they are meant or said at meetings," one commissioner said Monday night.

Obviously, there is some truth to that. It's impossible to reduce all the rhetoric

• See FORUM page 3

• HAWK'S EYE VIEW •



LETTERS-TO-THE EDITOR-POLICY

We reserve the right to reject or edit submissions. No anonymous letters will be accepted. Views expressed are not necessarily those of Highlands' Newspaper.

Please email letters by Monday at 5 p.m.
There is a 500-word limit without prior approval.

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Adobe PDF version at www.HighlandsInfo.com

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• FORUM •

A new year of wars

By Lee Hodges
Highlands

As we "rung" in the New Year with bells and horns, there are many who heard only bombs and bullets. At this point in time there are 30 wars going on around the world. The small civil ones you probably have never heard of like the Paltani - Thailand that began in 2004 and the Baluchistan-Pakistan war which also began in 2004 (Ref Global Security.org, BBC, & Asian News Net) and the better known Iraq, Congo, Dafur, the complete unrest in the Horn of Africa countries, and now the new Israel-Gaza conflict. I spent my New Year's Eve as I normally do, at home, reflecting, and pondering what to do and where to put my energy. With the world in such conflict and bloody violent struggles what can one do? The first step for me was to educate myself better and pass the information on to those who will listen.

There are a lot of facts that never get to the Americans unless you go searching for them. So if you dare to read further I will share some facts that I have gleaned thus far with you about the direct connections between the U.S. and our role in these wars. One of our largest exports is armaments (last I checked 2nd in the world) and so no matter where the war we probably have our fingerprints on it even if we are not present and pretending to be peacekeepers. So the blood of the Congolese, Nigerians (est. over 4 million combined) and the 500 Palestinians thus far in the current struggle and most wars all are linked to us. We are not alone in this. Russia has its hand in it, too, in the same way.

This form of income is neither moral nor justifiable under many world accords and UN agreements. Most of you may remember the Iran/Contra scandal but did you know that in the same time frame Israel was also selling U.S. weapons to Iran (not Iraq) in exchange for oil? (Truthout.org). Iran can then conceivably sell them to whomever... maybe Syria who knows? Where is the morality we Americans assume we possess? Just because we don't fire them, are our hands clean?

There have been many opportunities for us to just scale down the arsenal but we just can't seem to give up those big bombs and weaponry and ah yes. the money. WHY? Howard Zinn talks about the American mindset that President-Elect Obama also referred to when referring to the war in Iraq. The President-Elect said in one speech (and I paraphrase) "getting out of Iraq is not enough, we must change the

• See FORUM page 16

... FORUM from page 2

and musings uttered at a three-hour meeting into a news story fit to print.

But now, the citizens of Macon County can see for themselves, which commissioners nod off during proceedings; which ones have a firm grasp on the workings of municipal government, which ones arrive on time, and which ones speak original thoughts rather than repeating what's been said by others. Mostly, they will witness government at the grass-roots level – a process that isn't streamlined or easy.

It's very possible — after watching a commission meeting — the citizenry will actually acquire a new appreciation for the job the press does in the final story that hits the street – telling the story while maintaining respect for the commission's job.

After all, we in the press know Macon County is about small town journalism — our kids go to school together, we attend church together, and we bump into each other at Wal-mart.

However, since these broadcasts can be used to validate stories printed in the press, Highlands' Newspaper is 100% behind them.

Though some commissioners think broadcasting the meetings will show the public the "real" story. The truth is the "story" might be more "real" than they want it to be.

... FOOD PANTRY continued from page 1

sorted and organized 14 mixed mystery boxes of canned and packaged goods then shelved all of the items in the correct location, flattened boxes for recycling and even swept the floors.

The Food Pantry, a joint mission between the Highlands United Methodist Church and the International Friendship center, is located on the alley behind the church. It is open once a week on Monday from 3:30-5:30 p.m. There is no charge and families are allowed to pick their own food. Eligibility is based on income and the quantity of food allowed is based on the number of people in a family. Currently, there are 220 registered families who are eligible to receive a box of food once a week. The highest number of families served on a single Monday was 79. The average this winter has been 63 families each week.

Fifty-eight volunteers keep the operation running. Before the Food Pantry door can even open for business, volunteers shop for food at the Manna Food Bank and various other resources. Other volunteers stock the shelves, flatten and recycle boxes, bag rice, beans and other bulk items, and clean.

On Monday when the Pantry is open, volunteers monitor the distribution of food, register shoppers, translate and assist shoppers. Several volunteers deliver food boxes to people who are unable to come to the pantry and choose their own food.

One volunteer schedules the Monday workers, one volunteer coordinates the shoppers and still another coordinates and

schedules the shelf stockers. Until recently it was a major job collecting enough boxes for the shoppers to use to transport their food. Recently 100 reusable bags were purchased and each family will now be required to return with their own bag each week. Record keeping occupies one husband and wife team for hours.

Food distributed at the Pantry comes from a wide variety of sources.

- Every Wednesday morning a volunteer shopper travels to Franklin to pick up food from Manna. Some of the Manna food is received at no charge and some is purchased at extremely discounted rates.

- Additional food is purchased as needed by designated pantry shoppers from a wide variety of local sources, ordered from Sysco and also occasionally purchased at Sam's Club or Costco.

- The Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Baptist and Community Bible Church take turns collecting rice, black beans, sugar, oil and canned fruit.

- Local restaurants have contributed everything from produce to candy: Fressers Eatery, Lakeside Restaurant, Nick's Fine Foods, Fireside Inn Restaurant, Kilwins, Wolfgang's on Main and Let Holly DO the Cooking are all big contributors to the Food Pantry. Debbie Grossman of Fressers Eatery recently put her staff to work on the never ending job of bagging rice and beans. Before Christmas, Lakeside gave so much produce it took two weeks to give it all away.

• See FOOD PANTRY page 4

• MILESTONES •

Betz graduates from UNC-Chapel Hill

Katherine Ann Betz graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Environmental Studies on December 14, 2008. Now in its third century, UNC belongs to the select group of American and Canadian campuses forming the Association of American Universities.

The 2008 Commencement speaker was Valerie Ashby, the Gordon and Bowman Gray distinguished Term Professor in the College of Arts and Sciences' chemistry department. In 2002, the American Chemical Society named her one of the top 12 young female chemists in the country.

Holden Thorp, the tenth chancellor of Carolina conferred the degrees to the students in the Dean E. Smith Center. Thorp, a Carolina alumnus and faculty member, took office July 1 following a national search that ended with his unanimous election by the UNC Board of Governors in May.

Betz, the 2004 valedictorian of Highlands School, is the daughter of Martha and Richard Betz, and the granddaughter of Jane and Alan Lewis, and Violet Betz all of Highlands.



Katy Betz

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... FOOD PANTRY continued from page 3

- Bryson's donates many boxes of canned and boxed food.
- Every Monday morning when their vegetable stand is open, August Produce contributes baskets of vegetables and fruit that are too ripe to sell but still fine to eat or cook
- Old Edwards Inn recently gave a large number of citrus gift boxes.
- Many boxes and bags of food are left in the office hallway of the Methodist church by generous contributors. Each week

volunteers move this food from the church hallway, down the steps and across the alley to the pantry.

• Kind people often drop in with bags and boxes of food for the pantry while volunteers are stocking shelves or working to prepare the Food Pantry for operation.

Financial contributions are used to purchase bulk rice and beans, canned vegetables, canned fruit, eggs, produce, meat, sugar, oil, tooth brushes, soap and toilet paper.

• See FOOD PANTRY page 8

• HIGHLANDS FINE DINING •

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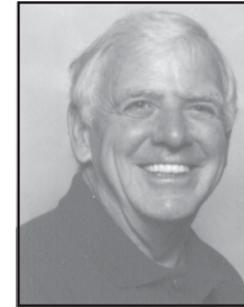
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• LAUGHING AT LIFE •

Wherefore art thou...Art?

This is an open letter to Art Williams, czar, lord and master over many wonderful things in Highlands.



Fred Wooldridge

• Feedback is encouraged!
email:

askfredanything@aol.com

recover from any of this. So what? It's nobody's business.

OK, OK, I know I'm beating around the "bush" and please excuse my bad language. I'll get right to the point. I was wondering if you would be interested in building another five-star enterprise that'll take you 200 years to financially recover from but will have all the little people cheering you. You see, when winter comes,

Dear Art:

Hi! I thought I'd drop you a line just so I can get a few things off my chest. It's been quite some time since your grandchildren have been out rappelling with us and we have had a chance to talk. I don't know how tuned in you are to the little people who live and work

in Highlands all year. Yes, Art, there are a few little people living and working in Highlands all year long.

Depending on the kind of little person one might speak with, you are viewed as either a great hero who has brought jobs, prosperity and done wonderful things for Highlands or they think you're the Darth Vader of Williamsville. Yes, Art, some of the little people are actually saying you want to change the name of Highlands to Williamsville. Is that silly, or what?

What I really, really...really like about you most is that you're controversial and don't give a tinker's hoot what people think. Me, too! Isn't it fun? You build, I write and folks get upset. Together, you and I have more Highlanders' shorts in a wad than anyone. Well, maybe the Mayor has us beat but he's a professional short wadder.

Every time you grab up another piece of property and build a five star something, you freak out a segment of Highlanders who think you're trying to buy the whole town. Hey, I say let them eat roofing nails! By the way, Art, did I mention everything I own is for sale? Write that down. Anyway, relax because this is not a bad thing. You know how to build first class stuff. Nothing wrong with that.

Even better, I know you don't give a big fat rat's ass whether your enterprises make money. As I watched you renovate and rebuild the Old Edwards Inn, I saw how much money you poured into that project. I was bowled over by the fact money was no object. You have built a magnificent five-star hotel right in the heart of what used to be sleepy li'l ole mountain town Highlands. I also realize you'll be 200 old before you financially

things get pretty quiet around Highlands and the little people don't have much to do.

OK, I'll just blurt it out. We need a multi-screen movie theatre with reasonable rates. There, I said it!

Year-rounders don't attend too many Highlands Country Club galas or drop into Madison's for dinner very often. Highlands used to have a big square dance barn where the little people could dance, tell lies, sip moonshine in the parking lot and pick up babes but big money people rolled in and put the kibosh to that.

Like most Highlanders, the li'l missus and I drive 42 miles round trip to Franklin's movie theatre for entertainment. With gas prices what they are, the cost of watching a 90-minute flick is more expensive than a burger at Madison's. Then, when we get there, our choices are grim. There's movies about animals that talk and kill people, mummies who fly and kill people, and monsters that rise from the sand and kill people. They even had a guy dressed like a bat. (I have a great bat story for you...later.)

Anyway, we long for normal movies with normal people who do normal things, like Wall Street corporations ripping off unsuspecting poor people and couples having sex before marriage but not after and gay cowboys falling in love on the frontier and normal stuff like that.

So, Art, think about this, please. We need your help. And as long as I'm begging, I'd also like a bowling alley, miniature golf course and go-cart track next to the new movie house. Hey, Art, remember what the preacher said. "Ask and ye shall receive." Well, I'm asking.

P.S. – Did I mention everything I own is for sale?

• THE VIEW FROM HERE •

Sign of the times

“Recession sale. No reasonable offer refused.” So read a sign at a store between Boone and Banner Elk.

It wasn't a real estate office or a car dealership. It was Goody's although they were offering 30%-60% off their entire inventory. I haven't the slightest what Goody's sells, and am not curious enough to go on line to find out. I certainly wasn't interested enough to go into the store looking for bargains. The place promising to accept any "reasonable offer" was selling eight foot bronze giraffes, a little bronze girl carrying an umbrella, and a painted Indian chief astride a galloping horse. The girl reminded me of the character on the Morton Salt box. Maybe that was the point.

I wondered what a reasonable offer would be in today's tough economic times. I wanted to ask, but it was Sunday and there was no sign of life at the shop. The front yard was full of bronze statues. Unlike a jewelry store where items are removed from display and secured in a vault, the proprietor didn't seem worried that someone would cart off his treasures. Who would steal an eight-foot giraffe? Who would make a reasonable offer?

This may be a new spin on an old scam. When I was a kid, Dad took the family to Florida every winter. We observed certain rituals. Each year we would attend the North-South Shrine game, one of a number of games featuring college seniors. We went to Pier 5 and drank water from a cooler, water which we believed was the tastiest in the world. We went to Hialeah to watch early morning workouts. We spent lots of time at the beach and ate at a lobster joint that offered all the lobster you could eat. My brother and I gorged ourselves, cleverly avoiding the slaw and fries to leave more room for crustaceans.

And we went to Miami Beach and visited auction houses and galleries. There was an art gallery that proclaimed year after year that it had lost its lease. Its loss was the customer's gain. Never trust a store that proclaims its misfortune with a sigh that is faded and frayed from sun exposure.

Unscrupulous merchants have used variants of that sales strategy for years.



Dr. Henry Salzarulo

**Feedback is encouraged.
email:**

hsalzarulo@aol.com

"Closing our doors forever," "Lost our lease," "Fire sale," are visible examples of the hook. When we moved to Seneca, S.C., Dobson Furniture plastered its windows with signs promoting a massive going-out-of-business sale. The sale continued so long that I thought I had misunderstood and that "Going out of Business" was the name of the store. The owner finally announced his final day in business. A local radio

personality was recruited to broadcast from the site and lure customers. "Well," I thought, "maybe I misjudged him." The store reopened the following Monday morning with a new name, "Arvin's Bargains at Dobson Furniture." Arvin was Mr. Dobson's wife.

On one of our visits to Highlands, before we moved here, in the days when we visited on weekends, cruised the shops, and dined at over-priced restaurants, we wandered into a quaint boutique with a boldly lettered "Going out of Business" sign. The shop was an eclectic collection of bronzes, lamps, rugs, and other artsy stuff. The owner was a high pressure salesman, one of those, "Just tell me what it's worth to you guys." We resisted pretty well until he told us the reason he was closing his shop was because he was dying with cancer. We bought some stuff and left, feeling that although we didn't need it, we had done a good deed. I never knew if the guy really had cancer, but if he did he enjoyed a splendid remission. The store remained open for years under the same management, the signs fading with age. I wanted to walk in while he had customers and express surprise at his survival. I never did and he never changed his sign to read, "Terminal cancer. Going out of business." He probably reasoned that customers would avoid his store. Besides better to confide in the customer if he seemed unlikely to make a purchase.

Earlier toady, as I drove past the bronzes in the front yard between Boone and Banner Elk and chuckled at the sign that read, "Recession sale. No reasonable offer refused," It resembled all the scams I've seen and wondered if it shouldn't include, "and I've got an aneurysm that might rupture at any moment."

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• REFLECTIONS FROM TURTLE POND •

Self-destruct mechanism

About a year ago I watched a film that was made in 1933. It wasn't about the Depression, but regularly throughout the film newspaper headlines

from the previous couple of years were shown, saying things like "Economy on the Rebound" and "Business Looking Up." I never thought I would see a depression in my lifetime — I thought the problem of

economic fundamentals had been solved.

But now it's looking like these things haven't been solved at all.

The United States has been the epicenter of the experiment in capitalism that has been going on for a few centuries now. Adam Smith, the philosopher who first clearly elucidated the principles of the market-based economy, published his seminal "The Wealth of Nations" in 1776, the same year as our Declaration of Independence. I find that very fitting.

Other western countries have modified and balanced capitalism with socialist policies. The U.S. has berated the rest of the world that if only they were more like us, the world economy would be much improved. Now we've led the whole world off a cliff.

Last month I read a classic book about economic thought called "The Worldly Philosophers" by Robert Heilbroner, first published in 1953. This is an overview of the greatest economic thinkers, summarizing their insights and presenting arguments for and against their ideas.

Adam Smith was the first economist — before the dissolution of feudalism there was no such thing as "the economy." His theory was that an individual who "intends only his own gain" is "led by an invisible hand to promote ... the public interest." Conservative economic thought down to the present day can be reduced to a worship of this "invisible hand" because it preaches a wonderful gospel: being selfish is the absolute best approach to life. Being selfish helps others.

Yet when analyzing the causes of our current financial melt-down, a clear and obvious element is the short-term selfish motives of many of the players — by caring only for this year's profits and this year's bonus, and nothing for the long-term viability of the business they were running or stock they were hyping, these people have wrecked the economy of an entire nation (if not world).

It looks to me like the invisible hand has taken their self-interest and ruined the public interest. When Heilbroner got to Karl Marx he said that Marx's analysis of capitalism was quite prescient — he envisioned such things as the growth of large corporations which was not obvious in his time — but it was Marx's analysis of social and political forces that was in error. He did not foresee that workers could and would fight and win political power to improve their situation without the need for revolution. However, Marx's economic analyses could not be ignored. And what is one of those predictions?

Capitalism would self-destruct. Could that be what we're witnessing?



Katie Brugger
k-brugger@hotmail.com

Whether or not that's the case, it is obvious that our economy is sick; could it be that the illness is capitalism itself?

Is there a fundamental error in capitalism? Maybe by deconstructing Adam Smith's formula we can discover not only the error but the solution.

Capitalism is based on the principle that if every individual is allowed to pursue his or her self-interest freely, that will

bring about the increase in wealth of the whole nation. I suggest that perhaps the error/solution is built on these two things: 1. the definition of "self" and 2. the definition of "wealth."

The narrow definition of "self" means things pertaining to me and my family, and that of "wealth" is money. I would suggest that personal greed is the self-destruct mechanism of capitalism.

Is my self-interest limited to my personal well-being and that of my family? In this ever-shrinking world, my well-being is increasingly linked to yours.

I don't have any children, yet I pay taxes for education and don't complain. Why? Because I think it's in my self-interest to live in an educated society, I gain because others have gained.

Human success — all the way back for millions of years — is due to cooperation. Anthropologists tell us that when we were hunter/gatherers our big brains allowed us to communicate and work together to bring down larger prey than we could ever do on our own; one mastodon fed the whole tribe.

Civilization is built on cooperation; the division of labor. Each of us no longer has to do the labor required to feed, clothe, and house ourselves. Other people make my clothes, grow my food, and build my house, so I can be free to write columns and film TV shows.

We are intertwined deeply. I am completely dependent upon you, and you, and... everyone.

I have heard economists quoted recently saying that we are in a paradox: if the average consumer acted in her self-interest, she would save her money and pay off debts, but this would be harmful to the economy as a whole because spending would keep dropping.

Capitalism is like a teen-ager who thinks he knows it all and is completely independent. Capitalism is based on the illusion that we are independent actors. The truth is we are profoundly *dependent*; on each other, on the whole, on society.

What is wealth? The capitalist equates wealth with money, cold hard cash, but I think that is a very narrow description. For

• See BRUGGER page 7

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• HIS & HERS •

The silence of snow

Whenever there is a decent snow storm at night, as there was in the Blue Ridge this week, the following morning reminds me of a handful of perfect days in my life, 50 years ago in Salisbury, Maryland.

Salisbury was then a very small town. Located on the Eastern Shore, it was halfway between the Atlantic Ocean and the Chesapeake Bay, about 20 miles away from each.

As a six-year-old boy, I had no comprehension of the influence of geography on weather. All I knew was, there was a sled in the front hall that had been there since September, and the snow for that sled fell everywhere except in my home town. Of course, there was a sound reason for that. The bay and the ocean are both heat sinks. They absorb summer heat, and radiate heat in the depths of winter. That's why the folks in the Midwest freeze in the wintertime, and fry in the summer. They don't have any heat sinks. But to me, back then, it only meant that there would be at best, two or three snowfalls, and the snow would be mostly gone before the end of the day.

I will always remember the first snow fall I experienced. I woke up that morning, and something was missing. It was like the A.A. Milne poem, "The Knight Whose Armor Didn't Squeak," in which Sir Thomas Tom did not hear the squeak of Sir Hugh's armor. That morning, I did not hear the ordinary sounds of traffic, and people, and animals and birds, in the 200 block of West College Avenue.

I ran to the window and looked out.

... BRUGGER continued from page 6

me a wealthy life is one that is filled with love and relationship, opportunity for personal growth and self-expression, exploration through travel or intellectual pursuits, sharing of gifts and talents to serve others. A certain level of money makes these things easier to attain of course: if you have to work 80 hours a week just to eat you will have trouble finding the time to learn to paint. But once a comfortable level of material well-being has been achieved, what does the further accumulation of money benefit?

Highlands is a town run on volunteers. Almost anyone who volunteers will tell you that their life is richer because of their service — not a penny goes in their pockets from their work so the riches are intangibles; the



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The world had a blanket of fresh, unmarked snow on it. That blanket was hiding all the sounds. I was listening to the silence of snow, and that was very good news.

In places like Atlanta, when two flakes fall, the city panics, and the schools close. In places like New Haven, the salt trucks and the snow plows roll, and life goes on as usual unless there is a monstrous blizzard.

Suffice to say, Salisbury was like Atlanta. The snow guaranteed the schools would be closed. I'd have the day to play on my sled, and come home wet, cold and tired, to dry clothes and a warm meal.

Those were perfect days. There were perhaps six of them.

Children, of course, believe in perfection if they have a decent childhood. Adults, if they've been paying attention, know that perfection is not for this world. Still, a new-fallen snow has its benefits here in the mountains.

The day is still announced by the silence of snow. The first question is whether there's so much snow so we can't get out the half-mile gravel road to go to town? Beyond that, is the pleasure of the snow.

There were the paw prints of a fox in the yard today; we have both red and grey ones in the surrounding forest. Our flock of wild turkeys showed up this morning to scratch for acorns on the lawn. There are five turkeys now. A week ago, there were eight turkeys. Probably, one of the foxes met one of the turkeys, producing one well-fed fox and one less turkey.

We'll go down the driveway very slow-

ly today. We'll inspect the road and the edges of the forest for evidence of others of our forest creatures, the deer, the bobcats, and so on. It is amazing how much activity goes on, every night around us, which is recorded and displayed in the fresh snow.

That sled from Salisbury is still here. It waits on the porch for someone with better knees and physical aptitude, like any of my grandchildren, to be here when the silence of the snow descends.

And then there is the special beauty of the mountains when the snow is hung on

the rhododendrons and the oaks and the holly bushes. It is a silent but eloquent reminder that even if the world isn't perfect, it can be either better or worse. And it's our duty to strive to make it better.

That's what this old man, 50 years removed from a boy with a sled in Salisbury, gains from the snow these days.

• About the Author: John Armor practiced law in the Supreme Court for 33 years. He now lives on the Eastern Continental Divide in the Blue Ridge of North Carolina. John_Armor@aya.yale.edu

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• CONSERVATIVE POV •

2009 is going to be a beauty – part deux

I don't know what happened to the title of last week's column, so I thought I'd try it again to see how it comes out this time. But I digress. What a week for news. Queen Nancy gets re-crowned as Speaker. Let's hope the 111th is more productive than the last one. Or maybe not. That was undoubtedly the greatest waste of a session of Congress in my admittedly porous memory.

I'd say the low point was to cave in to Secretary Paulson's hysterical weekend "the sky is falling" rendition of "give me your money." Thank goodness he only asked for \$700 billion. You would have thought that maybe there should have been just a teeny bit of oversight attached but evidently Chairman Frank had his mind on other matters at the time. Frank heads the House Financial Services Com-

mittee, which oversees housing and banking industries. Seeing that the financing of the housing industry created the banking debacle, I'd say Barney is culpable on many levels. But that was then, this is now.

All hell broke loose in Gaza, proving once again that the momentum of enmity built up between the warring factions over 4,000 or 5,000 years probably isn't going to go away anytime soon. I'm not saying that I'm a soothsayer or anything, but I did express my skepticism about Bush's plans to bring peace to the region by the end of the year (that would be last year). While he wasn't able to pull off the impossible task of bringing permanent peace to the Middle East, he deserves kudos for financing an effective attack on AIDS in Africa.

The Blagojevich drama careers on. Roland Burris, Blago's appointed heir to Obama's

Senate seat, showed up on opening day only to be turned away, creating a horrible PR problem for Senate Democrats. Square in the middle of the mess was weeny-in-charge,

Harry Reid, tiptoeing through the minefields he helped create. Poor Burris did a respectable job of publicly excusing the inanities of his party's leaders but putting lipstick on that pig just didn't work. It's embarrassing.

The Taiwan News put it far better than I. "In a bravura performance that began with a multilingual season's greetings, he (Blago) took the pile of steaming manure that's been on his head since the feds showed up to roust him from bed on Dec. 9th and spread it over the entire Democratic establishment, from the president-elect he never liked (and who disliked him back) to the U. S. Senate." Priceless.

Bobby Rush, long-time Illinois political hack emerged from the wilds of Chicago's South Side to put race on the forefront of the Burris snub, taking every opportunity to allude to lynch mobs and snarling German Shepards. This should come as no surprise since Rush, U.S. Representative from Illinois 1st District, was a co-founder of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party and is a member of the Congressional Black Caucus.

He holds the distinction of being the only person to defeat Barack Obama in an election when he defended his seat against Obama in 2000.

Meanwhile, back to Queen Nancy, she's got her hands full defending the esteemed Chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means, Charlie Rangel (D-NY). It seems that the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct (the Ethics Committee to you) found enough Official Mis-Conduct in Rangel's activities to choke a large horse. I've waded through a ton of stuff but I can't tell where this one stands.

I told you at the outset there would be major problems with her appointments.

You have heard this statement made before every Presidential election since you were old enough to vote. "Why would anyone want that job with all the troubles there are in the world?" While I appreciate the power and the perks and all the trappings that go along with the office,



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

this time I would consider that a reasonable question.

Consider poor Obama. He hasn't even been inaugurated yet and he doesn't stand a chance. No need to recount the horrible economic conditions staring him in the face.

The blow-up in Gaza bodes ominously for the future of the Middle East, and Iran doubtless presents challenges in the distribution of crude oil. Iran continues to be a threat on many fronts.

He'd better get going on those windmills.

His Vice-President elect, Joe Biden, promises an attack on the homeland early in Obama's administration. I haven't seen it yet, but I understand Obama's personal vehicle, "The Beast," is built like a tank. I guess the Secret Service isn't discounting an attack on him. He needs our prayers.

... FOOD PANTRY continued from page 4

Financial contributions have been received from: The Methodist Church, The Mountain Top Rotary Club, Highlands Country Club, The Hack Family Foundation, 'Tis the Season, the Girl Scouts, Summit One Gallery, and numerous contributors who prefer to remain anonymous.

Last year the Chamber of Commerce "After Hours" collected so many donations it took two days to get it all on the shelves.

The shelves of the Food Pantry do not have the same items every week. Sometimes the shelves are bursting and other weeks the shelves seem somewhat empty. Once every 6-8 weeks each family is allowed one bag of sugar and one bottle of cooking oil. All purchases are made to compliment food already donated and also to encourage the families who rely on a weekly food box to follow a healthy diet.

The Food Pantry coordinators and volunteers continue to be amazed at the many generous gifts that arrive just when the cupboard seems bare. This past Thanksgiving a gift of 60 turkeys was donated and then just before Christmas, a monetary donation allowed the purchase of a whole chicken for each pantry family. Several months ago when the juice supply at Manna was sparse, a donation of 12 cases of canned fruit juice filled the empty juice self.

Last year when the rice and beans were in short supply, a gift of one-pound bags of rice and one-pound bags of beans lasted

•See FOOD PANTRY page 14

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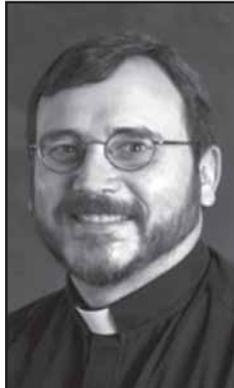
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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

Be ready for 'the call'



Rev. Dean Cesa
Our Lady of the Mountain
Catholic Church

The cliché that God works in mysterious ways is certainly true of how he calls and whom he calls to serve him. This weekend at church, we heard such an account from the First Book of Samuel. The account of the dialogue between Samuel and the old priest Eli can't help but seem surprising. Here Samuel keeps going back and forth to Eli who keeps telling him that he didn't call him and he should go back to sleep. But eventually Eli realizes that it is the Lord who is calling Samuel and so instructs him on how to respond, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

There are certainly many examples of this in the bible. Abraham is visited by travelers out in the desert and puts together a quick meal - how fast could you slaughter and prepare a calf? Moses is drawn by the sight of a bush on fire and yet not burned. David - one minute he is out herding sheep and the next he's anointed king. The common thread here is that the call is surprising. Out of the blue with no warning, God calls his servants.

The call of the first disciples of Jesus is no different. John the Baptist is walking along with two of his followers. Suddenly they come across this strange man from Nazareth and John says something which must have sounded very strange, something about the Lamb of God. Jesus asks them, "What are you looking for?" The disciples say, "Where are you staying?" He replies, "Come and you will see." At once, John's friends drop everything and start following Jesus.

What was it about Jesus that made people drop everything, from fishing nets to tax records, and start following him? We don't know what he looked like - no photographs. We don't know what his voice sounded like - no recordings. We can picture what he looked like on the cross - nothing very attractive there. The prophet Isaiah foretold his appearance: there was in him no stately bearing to make us look at him, nor appearance that would attract us to him. Yet they did follow him and many have ever since. Saint Paul on his way to Damascus, Saint Benedict waiting for the storm to pass in the cave, Saint Patrick returning to Ireland, the land he fled as a slave, Saint Maximilian Kolbe to his death in a Nazi concentration camp, Martin Luther King, Jr.

We may not consider ourselves in league with these. But this does not mean that we are not called as they were. Saint Paul wrote to the Corinthians to glorify God in your body - in the place where you are now. That means that whatever state in life we find ourselves - married, single, employed or unemployed, Jesus calls us to serve.

So, listen for that question from Jesus, "What are you looking for?" If we say with the disciples, "Where are you staying?" He replies to us in the same way, "Come and you will see."

• PLACES OF WORSHIP •

BLUE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

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

BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 11
First Saturday: Singing at 7:30 p.m.

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Church: 706-746-2999

Pastor's residence: 706-746-5770

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Wednesdays: 9 a.m. Healing and Prayer with Holy
Communion each service

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NC 28 N. and Pine Ridge Rd., (828) 369-8329
Rai Cammack, Branch President, (828) 369-1627

CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

Office - 526-2320

Sunday: Holy Communion -- 11 a.m.
(Highlands Community Center on. U.S. 64 next to
the ballfield in Highlands

Monday: Evening Bible Study at 6 p.m.

Wednesday: Men's Bible study at 8 a.m.
at First Baptist Church

Pot Luck Lunch last Sunday of each month.

CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Everett Brewer

Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 11
Prayer - 6:30 p.m.

Evening Service - 1st & 3rd Sunday -- 7 p.m.

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

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Pastor Gary Hewins

3645 U.S. 64 east, Highlands

Sundays: 9:30am Sunday School for all ages;
10:45am Worship; 6pm High School Group
Tuesdays: 10am Women's Bible Study; 2nd, 4th, &
5th Tuesdays Young Mom's Bible Study

Wed.: 5pm Dinner; 6pm AWANA, Youth Activities

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

The Rev. Brian Sullivan - Rector: 526-2968

Sunday: Breakfast; 9 A.M. - Sunday School
10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist (Rite II)

Sunday Service on Channel 14 at 10:30 A.M.

Monday: 4 p.m. Women's Cursillo Group

Tuesday: 8 a.m. Men's Cursillo Group

4:30 P.M. Education for Ministry

Wednesday: 6:30 P.M. Choir Practice

Thursday: 10 a.m. Holy Eucharist (Chapel)

10:30 a.m. Daughters of the King

• Sunday Service on Channel 14 Sun. at 10:30 a.m.

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Wed: dinner 5 p.m. followed by children's

Pioneer Club 6 p.m.; Jr & Sr Youth Group 6:30 p.m.;

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a.m.; Youth - 6:30 p.m.; Choir - 7:15

Wednesdays: Dinner - 5:30 p.m.; Team Kids - 6
p.m.; Prayer - 6:15 p.m., Choir - 7:30 p.m.

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Mondays: 8 a.m. - Men's Bible Discussion &
Breakfast

Tuesdays: 10 a.m. - Seekers
Choir - 7

HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Sixth Street

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Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study - 7

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Pastor Paul Christy

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5 p.m. Youth Group

Wed: Supper; 6; 6:15 - children, youth, & adults
studies; 6:15 - Adult choir

(nursery provided for Wed. p.m. activities)

Thurs: 12:30 - Women's Bible Study (nursery)

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Rev. Clifford Willis

Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 11 a.m. & 7

Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg. - 7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Alfred Sizemore
Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 10:45 a.m.;

Evening Worship - 6 p.m.

Wed: Adult Bible Study & Youth - 7 p.m.

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• COOKING ON THE PLATEAU •

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These bread bowl recipes will add distinctive flavor to Bowl Bash plans. For more recipe ideas, visit kingshawaiian.com.

Simple and Savory Healthy Veggie Dip

2 16-ounce loaves King's Hawaiian Sweet Bread

2 8-ounce containers plain yogurt (Greek style preferred)

1 package vegetable soup mix (2.4-ounce package)

Vegetable medley cut for dipping (carrots, celery, cherry tomatoes, jicama, broccoli, etc.)

Carve out center core of one loaf of bread within two inches of bottom and sides, keeping bread intact. Cut reserved bread and other loaf into 1-inch cubes for dipping. Place 1 3/4 cups yogurt into a bowl and add dry soup mix. Stir. Add more yogurt to taste. Pour into hollowed out loaf. Serve with vegetables and additional pieces of bread cubes for dipping.

Hearty Cajun Andouille Sausage Dip

Makes: 6 to 8 servings

2 16-ounce loaves King's Hawaiian Sweet Bread

8 ounces Velveeta, cut into smaller blocks

8 ounces cream cheese, softened

12 ounces Cajun-style Andouille

smoked pork sausage, cut into small pieces

3/4 teaspoon Cajun seasoning

Carve out center core of one loaf of bread within two inches of bottom and sides, keeping bread intact. Cut reserved bread and other loaf into 1-inch cubes for dipping. Place sausage pieces into large frying pan and sauté until cooked thoroughly. Add cheese and cream cheese and stir until melted. Add Cajun seasoning; adjust to taste. Pour into hollowed out loaf. Serve with celery sticks, additional pieces of bread cut into cubes for dipping. Serve with a spoon or knife to help spread this hearty dip.



• Courtesy of Family Features

... NC DOT continued from page 1

"The number one priority following snow and ice events is to de-ice with salt and chemicals and plow primary roads U.S. 64, U.S. 441, NC 106 and NC 1974," he said. "After that, secondary roads, NC 28 north of Franklin, NC 28 south of Highlands and two roads in Nantahala, will be plowed and treated with abrasives – sand and chat – but will not be salted."

Other secondary roads and other routes in Macon County will be treated in emergency situations.

Burch said he knows people aren't used to this policy but "in the past we have executed a policy above normal standards, but due to the economy, we must revert to our bare pavement policy until our budget improves," he said. "We just can't provide that high level

... PROGRESS continued from page 1

Macon County has one school in Sanction Level 2 for Math who offered public school choice and supplemental education services (SES). Macon Middle School which had two subgroups that didn't make AYP – Economically Disadvantaged and Students with Disabilities.

SES runs November through February and is for students who are eligible for free and reduced meals. Macon Middle School has 33 students who signed up and who will receive 20 sessions of free, after school tutoring with a student cap of \$1,045.

Macon Middle School is also a Sanction Level 1 school for Reading – with two subgroups that didn't make AYP – Hispanic and Students with Disabilities.

"We have students who can't speak English but they are expected to meet the same goals as English speaking students," said ad-

MC Commission worksession extras

Last Saturday, following hours of hard budget talk, commissioners tossed around ideas promoting life enrichment in the county.

Likening the economic downturn to the depression, Commission Chairman Ronnie Beale suggested two "communal" type projects. The first was partnering with the private sector to provide child care using the old Cartoogechaye School.

There are about 150 children on the Macon County Program for Progress waiting list and those families meet specific economic guidelines. "So it's likely the need for child care in the county is much larger than that," he said.

Commissioner Jim Davis asked why child care was the responsibility of the government. "The more we perpetuate a 'nanny government' the worse it's going to get," he said.

Beale's second idea was about establishing community gardens.

"The county has lots of property, some in the floodplain area that would be good for this sort of thing," he said. "Times could get tough and growing vegetables could help."

He said the county could partner with the NC Co-op Extension so gardens could be estab-

lished for people without land. He even suggested using inmate labor to maintain the gardens especially if using large tracts of land.

Commissioners also discussed water/sewer service districts as a way to deal with impending septic failures in the county and more stringent laws imposed by the state concerning repairs and replacements.

The board agreed to work closer with the Planning Board and to be more proactive rather than reactive concerning planning issues in the county. Up next is a nuisance ordinance, a noise ordinance and the junk ordinance, which commissioners said needs work. They intend to discuss its verbiage during the Mon., Feb. 23 commission meeting.

Commissioners also voiced concern over the state of the Arthur Drake Road in a subdivision in Franklin. They said 240 people representing 53 families are living on a substandard dirt road that is almost impassable when it rains. Though they acknowledged that it isn't the county's job to fix or maintain private subdivision roads they will see if right-of-way can be obtained so DOT can improve the road.

– **Kim Lewicki**

ministrators. "This brings the scores down for the entire school."

Because East Franklin was labeled Sanction Level 1 for Math, it had to offer Public School Choice so three students from East Franklin transferred to Cullasaja and one student transferred to Iotla.

Four students from Macon Middle School also transferred to Highlands.

It costs the school district \$3,000 a month to run the bus to Highlands to service those four students.

In 2008, Highlands, Cartoogechaye, Cowee, Cullasaja, Franklin High School, Macon Early College, and Nantahala hit all their AYP target goals.

Macon Middle School, East Franklin, Macon Middle School and South Macon schools didn't meet their targets. – KL

ed to jobs."

Burch said if the DOT continues to spend at the rate it is spending now it will be out of money by May. "We have to follow the money. If there's no money we have to make hard decisions."

In December, Highlands Public Services Administrator Lamar Nix said DOT's policies won't affect the Town of Highlands or his department, though the price of salt has impacted how he uses it.

Last year he paid \$70.50 per ton for salt delivered to Highlands, but on Dec. 4 he got a quote of \$193.23 a ton delivered. "And one supplier said we could have it for \$83.95 a ton but we'd have to go to Wilmington, NC to get it," said Nix. "That's just not reasonable."

Highlands street crews maintain both primary and secondary roads within the town limits because 'we're here,' said Nix. "For safety reasons, we clear roads — city streets and primary roads like portions of U.S. 64 which is Main Street — until DOT can get up here and then they pick up where we left off," said Nix.

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With the price of salt so high and the chance of a hard winter, Nix said he's going to have to rethink salt allocations. He normally orders 120-200 tons a year; this year he's going to try to make do with what's in storage.

"Right now our salt shed is full so we don't have a problem, but I'll have to slow down its use or rather adjust the mixture to make sure it lasts through the winter," he said.

The salt shed is split in half with one half housing 80 tons of bulk salt and the other half housing a mixture of salt, sand and chad.

Nix said 80 tons of bulk salt translates into 250-300 tons of mix, plenty for Highlands' needs.

He said DOT's budgetary problems won't affect Highlands, at least not within the town limits.

Wesley Grindstaff, who also attended the Monday Macon County Commission meeting said DOT typically replenishes salt supplies several times a year, but it won't be reordering at the same rate this year.

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Highlands basketball roundup

By Ryan Potts

Last week the Highlanders and Lady Highlanders had a successful Friday evening in their first matchup with conference foe Blue Ridge.

The Lady Highlanders started strong against the Bobcats, jumping out to an 8-0 lead in the first minute by using a diamond and one press to successfully force turnovers.

After a quick timeout by the Bobcats,

Highlands came out of the press, but still dominated en route to a 22-1 score at the end of the first quarter.

The second half saw the Lady Highlanders freely substituting players and allowing some of their younger players extended minutes. These freshman played well, and the Lady Highlanders finished with a 72-21 victory.

Brie Schmitt, Emily Munger and Julianne Buras all scored in double figures for the Lady Highlanders. They were followed by Taylor Buras and Sarah Power with 9, Sayne Feria-Cruz and Marlee McCall with 5, Stephanie Smart, Elizabeth Gordon and Kate-Marie Parks with 4 apiece and Jessica Gagne with 1.

The same night, the Highlanders bounced back from a disappointing loss to Hiawassee Dam with a 69-23 defeat of Blue Ridge.

Highlands struggled a bit early trying to find a rhythm, building an uncomfortable 26-14 lead. However, in the second half, the Highlanders finally looked like a team all on the same page as they exploded to a 15-0 run that would put the game out of reach.

Highlands placed 4 scorers in double figures, led by Michael Baty with 19, Ezra Herz and Sammy Wheeler with 11 and Michael Shearl with 10.

Highlander senior Ezra Herz recorded a rare triple double, with 11 points, 10 assists and 13 rebounds.

Highlands will travel to Topton Friday night to face Nantahala in what will be a crucial conference game for both teams.



Robbie Vanderbilt goes for a basket at the Friday home game against Blue Ridge. Photo by Debbie Hornsby



Ryan Vinson holds on the Highlands School Middle School team holds his own against the Tarheels on Dec. 4.

Photo by Noel Atherton



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John F. Baumrucker, MD (828) 526-1700	
J. Scott Baker, MD (828) 526-1700	
Debra A. Wagner, MD (828) 787-2430	
Visiting Physicians & Providers	Suite 304
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Charles C. Thomas, MD (800) 322-2461	

For the latest, most up-to-date information on physicians and services, visit us on the web at highlandscashiershospital.org

• COACH'S CORNER •

Doubt the Ravens, nevermore

I must admit that as an NFL fan, and a fan of the New Orleans Saints, I have paid a lot of attention to defenses lately. I say this mainly because the Saints don't technically have a "defense" so to speak. Sure, they run 11 guys out there, but it is mainly just to try and get in the way of the opposing team rather than actually stop them.

However, the four remaining teams left in the hunt for the Super Bowl actually have defenses that cause fits for the other teams as well as supply their offense with great field position, thanks to takeaways.

I wrote that particular paragraph to emphasize the importance of defense in the NFL today. And while Arizona has a good defense, and Philly and Pittsburgh have great defenses, the Baltimore Ravens defense stands alone as the greatest and most consistent defense of the 21st century. (Yes, it's early, but as a writer I am obligated to use just a wee bit of hyperbole.)

While the Ravens do have a Super Bowl to their credit (2000), they have not been a "dominant" team over the last decade, mainly due to their lack of offensive firepower. However, the Ravens defense has been consistently great, and has been led for the past decade by a future Hall of Fame linebacker in Ray Lewis.

While Lewis has been the face of the Ravens defense, they have also featured other terrific players over the years such as Sam Adams, Rod Woodson, Haloti Ngata, Terrell Suggs, Bart Scott and Ed Reed. The Ravens defense has also been led by three outstanding defensive coordinators in Marvin Lewis, Mike Nolan and now Rex Ryan. Lewis and Nolan both went on to become head coaches in the NFL, while Ryan is now one of the hottest names in coaching.

What makes the Baltimore defense unique is not just the way that they force turnovers, score points, flip field positions and generally terrorize opponents — what separates Baltimore is the



Ryan Potts
tryanpotts@hotmail.com

leadership role that this defense takes on a weekly basis.

Baltimore's offense is not asked to score they are simply asked not to turn it over, and the defense will give them opportunities.

Case in point -- Sunday against Tennessee, the Ravens defense thrice forced Tennessee turnovers, and yet Baltimore only scored three points off those turnovers. Most coaches would throw a fit about such a stat, yet the most important stat for the Baltimore coaching staff was zero...as in zero turnovers.

Once again, Baltimore's defense took the mantle on themselves and were able to get a win for the Ravens, much in the same way that they did in their first playoff game with the Dolphins. And while in the NFL offense is sexy, there is a Gladiator-like intrigue in watching the Ravens maul another offense week in and week out.

Much like the Romans, we do enjoy our violence, and no team produces more violent collisions than the Ravens.

Picks for this weekend Baltimore 20, Pittsburgh 17, Arizona 30, Philadelphia 24.

No more AJC in Highlands

Saturday, January, 10, was the last day the Atlanta Journal Constitution (AJC) newspaper was available in the Highlands area. The nearest place to find the AJC is in Gainesville, GA.

In fact, some areas between Gainesville and Clayton, GA, have not had AJC for several years, but because of the higher number of AJC sales in Franklin, Highlands and Cashiers delivery was continued. There is a possibility, but not a guarantee, that the Sunday AJC will be delivered to retail locations in Highlands during the summer season.

Daily papers "paid for" across the country are facing financial crisis and cutting expenses wherever possible. Shrinking distribution and circulation is one way to trim costs.

Animal shelter bid comes in higher than expected; Commissioners move forward with project

With the construction work bid out, it looks like the county's animal shelter on Lakeside Drive will open sometime in April.

After much discussion, at Monday Macon County Commission meeting, the board agreed to award the bid to Western Builders of Sylva — the same firm working on the East Franklin School.

Long before the county was ready to actually build the shelter, the budget for the project was set at \$350,000. Now, almost three years later when the job was actually bid out, the lowest bid was \$497,900.

After negotiating with the Western Builders, County Manager Jack Horton and Ritter Architects were able to reduce the bid to \$425,860, but that's for construction only and that means, among other things, substituting a asphalt shingle roof for a metal roof and using skylights instead of solar tubes for natural light.

Site preparation on Lakeside

Road will cost \$17,000; architect and engineering costs are \$21,300; and water/sewer will cost about \$25,000. None of these costs were figured into the budgeted \$350,000 which was an estimate Horton inherited from the previous administration.

"I had my reservations and didn't think the entire project could be done for \$350,000," said Horton. "Especially when you figure in site work, architectural fees and water and sewer."

Commissioner Chairman Ronnie Beale said the \$350,000 came from a county employee "who simply looked up the cost of metal buildings on the Internet. It didn't take into account state guidelines for animal shelters or anything else and what we have in front of us now doesn't resemble what we started with."

Commissioners Brian McClellan and Bobby Kupperts said next

time the county budgets a project all costs should be included so the public knows up front. But County Finance Director Evelyn Southard said there's no way to know all the fees and all the costs until a project is finalized and bid. In fact, the proposed site for the shelter changed when water/sewer was cost prohibitive.

Horton said the money for the project is available by appropriating unexpended operational costs — set at \$275,000 for 2009. When the shelter opens in April only about one-third of the budgeted operational costs will be needed for the remainder of fiscal year 2008-2009 so the rest can be used for the project.

"I recommend the county award the bid, add \$5,740 to contingency and establish a total project budget of \$500,000," said Horton.

The board agreed unanimously.

— Kim Lewicki

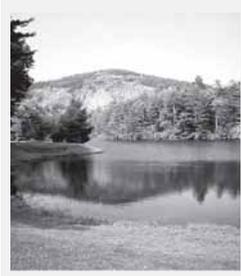
Cheerleaders rally crowd at Friday game



The Highlands School Varsity cheerleaders performed at the Jan. 9 home game against Blue Ridge. Top from left: Carolyn Hornsby and Shelby Johnson. Bottom from left: Marisol Ruiz, Bevan Schiffli, LaDonna Rodriguez, Kaitlin Lewis, Stephanie Puchacz, Katie Durham.

Photo by Debbie Hornsby

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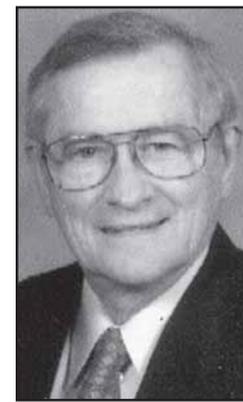
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• FROM MY PERSPECTIVE •

A recap of last week



Mayor Don Mullen

The Town Board of Commissioners began 2009 in a mild snow storm and had to shorten its first meeting of the year last Wednesday. I hope that is not an indication of how the year will go, but I am not superstitious, so I look for a great 2009.

At that meeting we did have a chance to welcome our new manager, Jim Fatland, and once again announce the board retreat we will be having at the end of January. I was pleased also to announce that the Town Board has been invited to attend the retreat of the Macon County Planning Board which also will be at the end of January. Ronnie Beale, the chairman of the county board extended this invitation to us, certainly indicating the cooperation that now exists between town and county governments.

After some discussion regarding the pole attachment fees, the board elected to keep the fee the same as it has been for several years. Raising the fee would simply result in cable fees for individual users also being raised a dollar and a half or more which essentially would be an additional tax on the people. At this time in the economic downturn we certainly do not want to raise taxes. We will simply pay for the pole change outs from the reserve funds we have and pay the reserve fund back with attachment fees. Hopefully that way satisfy everybody.

We also discussed the grant application for the Clean Water Management Trust Fund to correct problems of storm-water related issues with the Mill Creek runoff. We had requested McGill and Associates to write the grant application at a cost of \$7,000. Our new manager, Jim Fatland, asked them to do this application without costs and they have agreed to do that, saving the town \$7,000. The major problem in the Mill Creek area is at the Laurel and 5th Street culverts. The board decided to request funding of \$291,000 from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund and match that with \$59,000 from the town to upgrade these two culverts.

At the town meeting on this past Wednesday, we also received a written report from the manager stating his method of leadership and initial steps to be taken in his duties. He will be meeting with the department heads on a weekly basis and other supervisors on a monthly basis to keep communication with employees open and keep the board informed as to activities in the town.

The new manager will also be looking at the recycling issue over the next few weeks. We have a private firm, the Trash company out of Cashiers, who want to do recycling in Highlands beginning this January. In fact, this past Thursday they started at my house. I think when people find out about this service they will jump on the band wagon and participate in this much needed service. Right now it will cost about \$15 a month to have recycle material picked up curbside

once a week. Jim Fatland will be looking into the details of this operation and come back to the board at the end of the month to make further recommendations.

The board also received the annual report and budget for 2009 from the Highlands Fire and Rescue team and Chief James Manley. They received a total of 384 calls in 2008 which included 208 fire related calls and 178 rescue and first responder calls. The Fire and Rescue team completed 1469 man hours in training and 2204 man hours in calls during 2008. We now have 29 members on the team which is one short of the 30 member roster. It is interesting that fire alarms were down to 69 this year compared to 85 last year due in part to the charge of \$250 per false alarm after the first false alarm in a year. We are certainly proud of the work that "Popcorn" and his team are doing for the Highlands plateau and commend them for this fine work.

... **FOOD PANTRY**
continued from page 8

almost two months. Recently while picking up bulk sacks of rice at Costco near Mall of Georgia, a food shopper was approached by stranger who wanted to know why he needed so much rice. After listening to the shopper's description of our Food Pantry, the stranger pulled out his wallet and donated \$40 in cash to buy more food.

The Food Pantry epitomizes a community operation. The successful operation depends on every single volunteer and contributor. If you know of a person or family who could benefit from this mission, encourage them to come to the Food Pantry on Monday afternoon between 3:30-5:30 p.m. If someone is housebound or unable to get to the Pantry, please call the Highlands United Methodist Church at 526-4530 or the International Friendship Center at 526-9938 extension 290 or 252.

The Girls' Clubhouse was started 12 years ago by Kim Lewicki. Each school year brings a new group of middle school girls to the club.

• ANOTHER POV •

A new year

Before I begin this column I want to thank all those that wrote to me expressing their appreciation for my column and wishing me to continue with *Another Point of View*. My original intention was provide a *Point-Counterpoint* column with another writer but that challenge was not accepted. Still seeing the need to present another point of view on the political activities of the day, I decided to provide my alternative position in this paper only for the remainder of the election process and then "retire." But now after receiving so many responses I have decided to return on a bi-weekly basis to the business of writing this column. I do so in hopes that I may provide some points to ponder. I know that my positions are not always those of the majority but I am convinced that we need to hear the other side of any argument, if only perhaps to reassure yourself that our position is sound.

If anyone were to say a year ago that we would be in the financial situation we are in they would have been thought to be, at the very least, wrong, and more likely thought to be some sort of crazy, trouble maker just seeking air time.

Well, there were signs of the impending downturn voiced by some but nothing on the order of what happened. For example, Global Insight, which is said to be the "global leader in economic and financial analysis, forecasting and market intelligence for more than 40 years" is a company that puts out a list of the top 10 financial predictions for the year. Of their 10 predictions for 2008 [there's a link on my website] it would seem they missed the mark on most. However their analysis did end with "If oil prices continue to fall, and end up in the \$75 - 80/barrel range early in 2008, the U.S. economy will probably be able to escape recession. However, either another rise in oil prices or some other shock (even a small one) could be the straw that breaks the camel's back. Global Insight has raised the probability of a U.S. recession from 35% to 40%."

Although not a prediction per se, the warning seemed to be dead on. On the other hand they did begin their predictions by saying, "Global Insight forecasts that the U.S. economy will rebound in the second half (of 2008)." Oops!

The sub-prime market fiasco, the price of oil going crazy, the stock market losing over a third of its value, the "Big Three" car maker's collapse, and scams like 50-billion dollar Madoff Ponzi fraud scheme has to make one pause and say, What's next?

The most common phrase you hear these days from Washington is "Bail Out" and every company, state and organization wants a piece of the free money pie. The numbers are staggering. Early in the year the president vetoed a bill for medical care



Matthew G. Eberz
Feedback is encouraged
Email: matt@matteberz.com

for children because the \$300 million price tag was "inflationary." Now the administration is handing out cash by the truck load.

Just to put a perspective on it, if you were to go on a personal spending spree and spend \$1,000 a minute, every minute for 16 hours a day you would spend \$9.6 million dollars a day. If you did that each and every day of the year without pause it would take you 200 years to spend the money — that's a lot of spending. To offer another perspective you could hire 200,000 teachers for 70 years with that same money.

Now financial predictions for 2009 range from rebound, to mildly worse, to "you ain't seen nothing yet," and if you read 2008 - *God's Final Witness* none of it really matters as the author predicts World War III and the end of it all.

So where are we? For me personally, I can't say that I made my fortune this past year. My novels haven't made the New York Times Best Seller list and my work in real estate pays the bills for which I am grateful, but it was not a banner year.

The predictions for bad times fill the media and I know of too many of my neighbors who are struggling financially. It is cause for concern. Over the holidays, at the end of a bad fiscal year, I did what I do every year—I watch *It's a Wonderful Life*. It is an uplifting story of the goodness of man-

kind that warms my heart and restores my faith in mankind.

Also during this holiday season my wife and I hosted and attended many gatherings of friends and family. One evening we hosted a dinner with 12 of our friends, all of whom had worked at the same office and now have all gone elsewhere (for which we are all thankful). We sat one large makeshift table where we ate way too much, drank a little, then ate some more (and some of us drank a little more). We talked and laughed. We spoke of old times, good times and future times. There was no talk of gloom and doom, no saddened faces, no melancholy brought on by lessening revenue streams; for we had each other and we were grateful. It was like family, good family — family without the drama — and when the evening was done we hugged and wished each other the best for the new year and set about the task of planning another evening together. It was the best of times.

Some people say that 2009 will be a very bad year. I have *Another Point of View* on that and in this era of predictions I will make mine. There is a newness in the air, and a feeling of change for the better fills us. There is a renewal that there can be honesty in government and real belief that we will find a better way, a way back to the principles "of the people, by the people (and) for the people."

I feel very positive about the people of Highlands, their character, the energy and their willingness to give to each other. I think that 2009 in Highlands will be a very good year, a good year filled with well-meaning, hard working people who love their land, their town and their friends.

My prediction for 2009 is that it will be a year where good people are free to meet together, laugh together and struggle to excel together, the rest will follow in good time. After all, it is a *Wonderful Life*!

I'll be back in two weeks with *Another POV*.

Greenway Trail work group to build steps and rock crib

The next Highlands Plateau Greenway trip will be a very special two-day event on Wednesday and Thursday, January 21 and 22. On Wednesday we will learn how to set up a high line system and then begin moving stones for rock-on-rock steps to their final location. We will also continue work on our crib if enough people are available.

If you are interested in participating please register with Hillrie Quin at 526-2385 or hmquin@verizon.net. We will

meet at the Peggy Crosby Center at 9 a.m. for a brief training session and then carpool to a trail section. Participants will be furnished the necessary tools and safety equipment. Participants should bring water, lunch, rain gear, a daypack to hold everything and boots and warm clothes that can get dirty are advised.

Fred Lashley our trail construction expert will teach us how to construct and use a high line system to move large rock.

Does your New Year resolution list look like this?

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- Quit smoking ✓
- Attend church ✓
- Work hard ✓
- Oil Change ✓
- New Tires ✓
- Don't procrastinate ✓

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• BUSINESS NEWS •

Chestnut Hill table-toppers add holiday cheer



Ladies at Chestnut Hill, with the help of artist and Bascom Volunteer Coordinator Margie Shambaugh, created festive Christmas tree table-toppers for the residential community. Shambaugh taught her team how to create the trees. "They added so much cheer to the dining hall, and we had a great time making them," Shambaugh said. "Its just another way The Bascom and Chestnut Hill have become friends." Pictured from right, front to back: Jennie Resce, Shambaugh, Katherine Kaiser, Gin French, Marie Cranston and Willard Allen. Left side, front to back: Myra Hunt, Peggy Nichols (seated), and Jeanie Pretz.

Construction on schedule for The Bascom's new art center; Six-acre, \$11 million campus to open in the spring

The Bascom is still on-track for an April move-in, and crews are working furiously to make sure every building on the six-acre campus is ready.

"The end of construction is within sight," said Pat Taylor, owner's representative and co-chair of The Bascom's facilities committee.

When complete, the \$11 million campus will include a 21,000-square-foot, three-story main building, a barn studio in a reconstructed stable, a historic covered bridge signature entrance, a nature trail with rustic pavilion, a café and more, all to offer The Bascom's exhibitions, art classes, educational programs and festivals.

Grand opening celebrations are being planned for June and early July. The Bascom's first benefit event, Collective Spirits wine festival, will be held in the new facility May 29-30. Exhibitions and classes are slated to begin in May.

According to Taylor, power and water

will be connected in the coming weeks. The sprinkler system has been flushed and is ready. The heating and air condition system will follow toward the end of January.

The terrace is complete except for some minor grouting. The metal rail for the terrace is on-site and ready for installation. The rockwork under the porte-cochere is complete.

Elevator installation will be finished within weeks.

The lower- and upper-level walls of the three-floor main building are sheet-rocked. Once the ceiling on the main floor is complete, that sheet rock can be finished also.

Installation of wood flooring will begin this month.

When Highlands gets enough dry weather, crews will finish the outdoor classroom and grading/landscape work at the back of the building. Rough grading on the

•See BUSINESS NEWS page 20

... FORUM continued from page 2

mindset that brought us there" Zinn says a war mindset has the following three components: 1) the idea that the U.S. is special and we are better, 2) Dissent against the government is unpatriotic so we must do as told. (Uncle Sam knows best) and 3) The idea that an act of violence can solve problems. (Zinn on Democracy Now).

I would like to share some of the facts about our most current turmoil because even though we are not fighting it taxpayers are. You should know where some of your money is going.

In 2007 the Bush Administration and Congress decided to increase its aid to Israel to 30 billion for military aid over the next decade. The U.S. signed a contract with Raytheon (1.3 billion) to transfer 1000s of missiles there. Last year we sent 200 million spare parts to Israel for the F-16 fighters we gave them and 186 million gallons of jet fuel. I don't know about you but I noticed last year America was sliding into a deep recession and a fuel shortage (or was it?) and one would think the government would be inclined to take care of its people first. At that point, there was no huge threat and no apparent need for more aid to Israel. You connect the dots. No one knew an Israeli attack was on the way.

On Nov. 4th 2008 the Israeli army sent assassins in to Gaza to kill four Hamas members suspicious of weapon smuggling. They succeeded and thus began the rocket attacks on Israel (Minn. Star Tribune & NPR). All you will hear from the corporate media and politicians is that Hamas broke the cease-fire.

So now 500 + civilians (by the way, that represents only women and children. Men are not considered civilian casualties in the Arab world) are dead in Palestine and 2,000 wounded with very little water, medicine, and no electricity. I do not think this is what the taxpayer had in mind for their hard earned money.

Let's do a little history and note that Israel did give up Gaza to the Palestinian people three years ago BUT maintained sovereignty and control of the borders. One has to ask, what kind of gift was that? There was a tease of freedom but with no real authority to act as a nation. Some believe it was more like a large prison. Since the borders were rarely open to the people of Gaza, they had shortages causing tempers to flare. Imagine having electricity only three hours a day, limited clean water, medicine, food, and petrol.

On the sea, Israel patrolled relentlessly and only allowed fishermen out a short distance to do their fishing. (Spotlight, BBC) Not much to work with as a struggling nation. Egypt stepped in to help when things began to get dire, but even they were limiting due to their political balance with the U.S. and other Western states. Squeezing the life out of the citizens does nothing but perpetrate the war. This brings back the notion of war profiteering. The U.S. does not

want a cease-fire as demonstrated by Condi Rice giving the green light for Israel to continue, "to defend itself." War is good business for the U.S. and has been since WWII. This outdated economic plan must stop.

War corrupts everybody. It is fought between two evils and no one is the good guy. The outcome of war is risky and very unpredictable. The idea to do evil (kill someone) for a possible good is ridiculous. No one comes out of war without scars, physically or mentally and of course the toxic debris left behind for the next generation is abhorrent.

There is hope that we may turn the corner and release this war mindset for diplomacy. Then the U.S. can lead the way by retooling our war making machines for better productive technology that embraces survival not annihilation and creating sustenance for all, sincerity, and humbleness we so lack among other nations. My resolve for now this year is to seek the truth and take action with humility and respect for all.

• THANK YOU •

Christmas dinner reflections

After what had to have been our most successful Christmas Dinner ever, I believe it is important to look back to see just what it took to make it so. We were so fortunate to have the likes of Kids Inc., Drake Diamond Gallery, Dr. Travis & Carol Goodloe, Macon Bank, Q.P.M., and Cris Hayes to help get the effort off the ground with sponsorship and donations. With good funding up front and Christmas day about two months away, Marty Rosenfield, owner of The Lakeside Restaurant, Debbie Grossman, owner of Fressers Eatery, and I sat down to plan. We went over the notes of our past events to determine just what we would need to go forward. First, we needed a place that could accommodate up to 300 people comfortably in an afternoon. Debbie Grossman generously donated her space, Fressers Eatery, to hold the event. Bob and Trish Kieltyla of The Christmas Tree supplied us with the beautiful tree we had in the main dining room, and Laura Huerta decorated the dining areas. We were even fortunate enough to have Grove Park Laundry donate the linens and Blue Ridge helped with coffee.

We needed food to cook, and we had some fantastic resources to draw from, many of whom donated a lot of the items we needed. U.S. Foods, Sysco Foods, and August Produce all supplied us with materi-

•See THANK YOU page 21

• UPCOMING EVENTS •

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) 787-2114.

• Refuge Youth meets every Sun. night at 6:30 p.m. downstairs at Cullasaja Assembly of God. If you are in grades 6th-12th then this is the place to be! The church is located at 6201 Highlands Rd. next to Exxon. For more info call youth ministers Matt and Candace Woodroof at 828-369-7540 ext 203.

• Raffle of handcrafted Stiefel Botanical Book to Benefit The Bascom. To purchase a raffle ticket, call 526-4949, ext. 8#.

• Yoga at the Rec Park, 7:30 a.m Monday and

Wednesdays. Call 526-4340 for information.

• Yoga in the bottom floor of Jane Woodruff Building. 10:30 a.m. Thursdays. Call 526-4340.

• NA open meeting every Saturday at 7:30 p.m. of the ACC Satellite Group at the Graves Community Church, 242 Hwy 107 N. in Cashiers. Call 888-764-0365.

• At Health Tracks at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, various exercise classes. Call Jeanette Fisher at 828-526-1FIT.

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

Mon. & Wed.

• Pilates Classes Level 1 of Jane Woodruff at the hospital at 4 p.m. \$10 per class. Call 526-5852.

• Middle School students After School Program from 3-5 p.m. at the Rec Park. For more information please call 828.526.3556.

Mon., Wed., Fri.

• Step Aerobics with Tina Rogers at the Rec Park, 8-9 a.m. \$10 per class or \$50 a month.

Wed., & Fri.

• Open AA meeting noon at the Episcopal Church at Fifth and Main streets.

Tues. & Thurs.

• Dance Aerobics with Susan, 8:30 a.m. at the Rec Park.

First Mondays

• Participate in your hospital by joining the Auxiliary of the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Auxiliary meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 10 a.m. at the hospital.

Mondays

• Open AA meeting, 8 p.m. at the Episcopal Church at Fifth and Main streets.

• Recreational Bridge 1 p.m. at the Rec Park. \$3 per person.

Tuesdays

• Highlands Rotary Club meets at noon at the Highlands Conference Center.

• Weight Watchers meets at the Highlands Civic Center. Weigh-in is at 5:30. The meeting starts at 6 p.m.

Wednesdays

• Highlands Mountain Top Rotary Club meets at the Highlands Conference Center at 7:30 a.m.

• Men's interdenominational Bible Study at 8:30 a.m. at First Baptist Church.

Every Third Wednesday

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

1st & 3rd Thursdays

• The local affiliate of NAMI NC (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

• AI-Anon meeting, noon at the Episcopal Church on Main and Fifth streets.

Thursdays & Fridays

• Live music at The Rib Shack from 7-10 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 16

• High Mountain Squares will dance this Friday night January 16th at the Macon County Community Building from 7-9 p.m. Bill Jones from Atlanta, GA will be the caller. We dance Western Style Square Dancing, main/stream and plus levels. Everyone is welcome. For information call 828-349-0905, 828-349-4187, 706-782-0943.

Saturday, Jan. 17

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 4.5 mile hike with an elevation change of 200-300 feet to Rock Gorge and Big Bend Falls on the Chattooga River. Meet at the Highlands Bank of America at 10 a.m. Drive 40 miles round trip. Bring water, lunch; wear sturdy shoes. Call leader Virginia Talbot for reservations, 526-4904. Visitors welcome, but no pets please.

Sunday, Jan. 18

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 2.2 mile hike with a short 1/4 mile climb on a loop trail in Standing Indian Campground. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin, opposite Burger King, at 2 p.m. Drive 30 miles round trip. Bring water, a snack if you wish; wear sturdy shoes. Call leader Kay Coriell, 369-6820, for reservations. Visitors welcome, but no pets please

"The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fran-

klin, NC, welcomes Dr. Donald McCormick, guest speaker on Sunday. This topic will be "An Update on Science vs. Religion." The Service and the Children's Service begins at 11 AM. The Fellowship is located at 85 Sierra Drive, off Lakeside, 1.2 miles from Hardees. All are Welcome. For information, telephone 828-524-6777.

• The Macon County Soccer Club (<http://www.maconsoccer.net>) will host an Entry Level Grade 08 Referee Certification Clinic on Sunday from 9 am to 6 pm. Both sessions must be attended and no late arrivals or early departures are permitted. George Gately with the NC Soccer Referees Association will be conducting the clinic. The cost for the clinic is \$67.00 and payment is due January 18 at registration (checks payable to NCSRA). Lunch will be available for \$5 (or bring your own). Must be 14 years or older by January 25th. Please enroll online. For more information visit <http://www.ncsra.org/> or call Tony Esterwood at 828-524-1928.

Monday, Jan. 19

• The Mirror Lake Improvement Association meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the Highlands Civic Center.

Beginning Tuesday, Jan. 20

• A Bible study for young adult women meets at the Rodenbeck home from 5:45-7:30 p.m. The winter study will be "Stepping Up - A Journey Through the Psalms of Assent" by Beth Moore. Call Martha at 526-3606 for details.

• See EVENTS page 22

HCP to present 'Carolina Murder Mystery' Feb 6-7



The Highlands Cashiers Players is presenting a Carolina Murder Mystery Dinner Theater at PAC on February 6th & 7th. Wine, Dine and Solve the Crime! "Final Reunion," it's the final reunion at Hinkley High, the building is being demolished and the graduates have come from far and near to say their farewell. Directed by Jody Read, featuring area favorites Ronnie Spilton, Stuart Armor, Dean Zuch, Virginia Talbot, Jim Gordon, and Mary Adair Leslie. Save the date for this HCP Benefit; for more information call: 828.526.8084. Class Historian, Mary Adair Leslie snaps photo of Jim Gordon, Football Star and Dean Zuch, the Hinkley High Principal.

Ruby Cinemas

Hwy. 441, Franklin • 524-2076

Playing
Jan. 16-22

GRAN TORINO

rated R

Friday: (4:30), 7:00, 9:30
Sat & Sun: (2), (4:30), 7, 9:30
Mon - Thurs: (4:30), 7

HOTEL FOR DOGS

rated PG

Friday: (4:10), 7:10, 9:10
Sat & Sun: (2:10), (4:10), 7:10, 9:10
Mon - Thurs: (4:10), 7:10

BRIDE WARS

rated PG

Friday: (4:15), 7:15, 9:15
Sat & Sun: (2:15), (4:15), 7:15, 9:15
Mon - Thurs: (4:15), 7:15

BEDTIME STORIES

rated PG

Friday: 7:05
Sat & Sun: (2:05), 7:05
Mon - Thurs: 7:05

MARLEY & ME

rated PG

Friday: (4:20), 9:20
Sat & Sun: (4:20), 9:20
Mon - Thurs: (4:20), 9:20

\$5. for 20 words weekly

• CLASSIFIEDS •

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LOST PET

BLACK & GREY TABBY last seen on Sassafras Gap Road in Clear Creek area of Highlands. Please call 526-5213 with any information.

BLACK MALE KITTEN, 8 months old. Fixed. Name is Einstein. Last seen near Wolfgang's Restaurant. Reward offered. Call 828-200-0711.

PUPPIES

FREE PUPPIES to a good home. Lab mix. 1st shots already given. 2 females 6 males. Mostly black a few of them have some white paws. Born Nov 17th. Call 526-2787 or 421-3969 if no answer leave message and we will return your call. Pictures available on request.

HELP WANTED

MLT or MT needed in the laboratory at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Second and third shifts available with an occasional weekend and holiday rotation. Registry of ASCP or equivalent is required. Must be able to work alone. 3-5 years experience as a generalist with blood banking is preferred. Full benefits, or the option to opt out of benefits for an increase in pay, available after 60 days of full-time employment. Pre-employment screening required. Call Human Resources at 828-526-1376 or apply online at www.hchospital.org.

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

CNA OR CNA II at Fidelia Eckerd Living Center. PRN positions are available. Our wage scale is \$11.00 to \$14.40 per hour, and you also receive shift

and weekend differentials. Pre-employment substance screening. Call Human Resources, 828-526-1301 or apply online at www.hchospital.org.

WORK WANTED

3BR, 2BA COTTAGE NEAR MIRROR LAKE – In town. \$1250 per month. Very clean. 770-977-5692.

ON MIRROR LAKE – Charming 3 bed, 2 bath. Huge sunroom, stone fireplace, 3 decks, canoe, furnished. Available Nov-May. \$1,500 a month plus utilities. Call 770-435-0678.

RESIDENTIAL FOR RENT

NEAR CASHIERS/LAUREL KNOBB ROAD– Newly re-furbished bungalow, perfect for one or two people. Call (828) 226-5265. \$500 a month. 1/15

LEASE HOUSE WITH OPTION AVAILABLE. Remodeled. Between Highlands and Cashiers. 3 bed, 3 1/2 bath and bonus room. No smoking. \$1,000 a month. Call 828-371-1609 or 828-743-1108 1/29

HOUSE FOR RENT, YEAR-ROUND, walk to town. 3/3, oil heat, hardwood floors, small pets ok. \$1,275 includes electric. 526-5558.

HOUSE FOR RENT AND SALE – 3/2 w/ office, great roommate plan 1600 sq. ft., gated community, Scaly Mt. half way between Highlands and Clayton, access to 17 acre lake and hiking from 424 sq ft porch or watch sun rise from 424 sq. ft. deck. \$1,200/mo plus utilities. Internet and satellite available. No children, pets, or ATVs; house actively being shown for sale during rental. Call Pat 828-243-9646 re rent or Becky 828-526-2475 re sale. psherrer@mindspring.com

DOWNTOWN APARTMENT RENTAL – One bedroom (Queen), one bath, vaulted ceiling in great room, heat and air with gas fireplace. Fully furnished with W/D, cozy and comfortable. Reduced to \$650 a month plus utilities. Call 526-4983 or 421-3614.

1 BED, 1 BATH and small room with bunk beds on Lake Sequoyah. Furnished, two boats. \$1,000 a month including utilities except phone. Call Tony at 828-332-7830.

SAPPHIRE NC – 2 Story 3Bed/3 Bath, Yr round

views, 2 decks, remodeled, Furnished, 2 car garage. Available yearly or seasonal. 561-626-9556

2 BED, 2 BA, COTTAGE – W/D, 2 miles from town off Cashiers Road. Garage/basement, covered deck. \$925 a month. Call 864-944-1175.

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.

ON MIRROR LAKE – Charming 3 bed, 2 bath. Huge sunroom, stone fireplace, 3 decks, canoe, furnished. Available Nov-May. \$1,500 a month plus utilities. Call 770-435-0678.

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 526-1684.

VACATION RENTAL

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

THE LODGE ON MIRROR LAKE – Fish or canoe from deck. Available weekly, monthly, No min. Call 828-342-2302.

ITEMS FOR SALE

HONEY FOR SALE – Blue Valley honey, perfect amber color, work in town. 3/4 lb. bears, \$5 each. Call Bruce at 526-0921.

GENERAL ELECTRIC GAS STOVE – Four burner, White, 30-inch slide in insert. New condition, never used. \$100. Call 706-746-2129 Rabun Gap, Ga.

LARGE CABINET ENTERTAINMENT CENTER from Dutchman's Design. Black/distressed. Very Nice. Sacrifice at \$400. Call 828-200-0737.

GE PROFILE WHITE COUNTERTOP GAS RANGE WITH DOWNDRAFT. Like new. \$185 Call 787-2232.

KOLCRAFT JEEP WAGONEER TANDEM DOUBLE STROLLER. Used rarely. Basically brand new. \$100 or OBO. Call 526-2536.

MAYTAG WASHER & DRYER – \$350 For both. Also, 13" Sony digital TV \$75. All very good condition. Call 526-2710.

125-Gallon All-Glass aquarium - over 6 feet in length, was a salt-water shark-only tank. Comes with Ehiem 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

HEALTHRIDER N35 RECUMBENT BIKE – Five programmed workouts, heart rate indicator. \$150. After 6 p.m. call 787-1264.

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.

BABY LOCK SERGER MACHINE with extra spools of thread. \$200.00 828-631-2675 after 5:00 p.m. Sylva area.

REDUCED! 52" BIG-SCREEN TV RCA Home-Theater edition, with guide-plus gold. Moving and its too big to take. \$375 or OBO; this TV is in great condition and has a perfect picture, purchased at Circuit-city. Allows for 480P HD through Direct-tv. Call cell: 828-342-2809

YARD MACHINE LEAF MULCHER – purchased at Lowes. Used only a few times \$350. 526-5056.

SIX CEDAR ADIRONDACK CHAIRS – custom made. \$100 each or all for \$500. Call 526-3824.

LENOX CHINA "AUTUMN" PATTERN – \$125 for 5-piece place setting or sell by the piece at 20% below store prices. Call 526-0498

3-PIECE BEDROOM SET – Oak veneer. one dresser, one desk, one chest. \$300. Call 526-5772.

STONE AVAILABLE – Assorted. 14 pallets. \$200 per pallet. Call 526-9532

MARTIN-C-1740 UNVENTED GAS HEATER – with oxygen depleting sensing system. BTU 40,000. H. 14 24 3/4 W. 25" D. 13". Fan blower-model B35. \$125. Call 526-5640.

BEAUTIFUL, KNOTTY PINE WOOD ENTERTAINMENT CENTER WITH POCKET DOORS. Will hold up to a 31" TV. \$100. Call 369-5863.

ANTIQUE WOODEN ROCKING CHAIR FROM LATE 1800'S. Fullyrefinished. \$100. Call 369-5863.

AVON CAPE COD RED GLASS – 8 piece place setting. 64 pieces. \$385. Also, accessory pieces available. Call 828-524-3614.

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

4 BOARD PINE DINING TABLE - \$300. Early American New England spinning wheel - \$225. 526-2671

GOLF CLUBS CLASSIC – SET OF MacGregor Tourney 9 irons (2-9 P.W.) 1980. Persimmon Drivers, new. \$50. Used \$25. Also miscellaneous items cheap. Call 706-746-3046. (Sky Valley).

MR. HEATER – 75,000 BTU. Forced Air Heater. Like New. \$110. Call 526-3206.

TABLE SAW – 9" with 4" Joiner. All one stand. \$75. Call 526-3206.

PFALTZGRAFF "HEIRLOOM" DISHES. Complete service for 8 plus numerous serving pieces, extras and accessories. Too much to list. \$300 Call (828) 631-2675 after 5 p.m. Sylva area.

JESSICA MCCLINTOCK VICTORIAN STYLE WEDDING DRESS. Very unique. Size 11/12. \$200. Call (828) 631-2675 after 5 p.m. Sylva area.

MAN'S FORMAL (MID-LENGTH) WESTERN STYLE BLACK COAT. Size 46. Worn once. Bought at Stages West in Pigeon Forge. \$150. Call (828) 631-2675 after 5 p.m. Sylva area.

8 SOLID OAK, LADDERBACK dining room chairs with woven seats. \$800 for set. Call 526-3048.

TWO LOW-BACK SOUTHWESTERN-LOOKING UPHOLSTERED CHAIRS. \$400. Call 526-5056.

... COSTS continued from page 1

For planning purposes, Tax Administrator Richard Lightner projected tax values through 2001-2012 at the reduced percentage.

Values in 2008-09 were \$9.04 billion; projections are: 2009-10, \$9.15 billion; 2010-11, \$9.20 billion and for 2011-12, \$11.05 billion.

"The reassessment for 2011 will be much different than the past assessments that saw values increase 1-20% per year. Unless the real estate market makes a major turn around in the second and third quarters of this year, tax values will only increase 1-5% per year or 20-25% for the new 2011 reassessment,"

reads Lightner's report. "That could result in a situation where the county could not cut the tax rate after the reassessment for a neutral tax rate as in the past. Even with real property going up 2-25% that would not be enough to balance the lost attributed to the loss of taxes on personal property during a reassessment year."

Horton said in the past property values went up so fast and so high the county was able to cut taxes to generate the same amount of money needed to operate the county.

The county has several options to make up the current budget shortfall.

Finance Director Evelyn Southard and

Horton took a scalpel to current department budgets and found potential cuts in each department.

"As of the end of December, we have extra money in almost every department budget," said Southard. "It's basically money that was budgeted but not used. We rarely spend everything budgeted."

Horton said he suggests adjusting department budgets but to do it carefully.

"We want to do this like a surgeon not a meat cutter," he said. "It's important that we maintain the same level of services to the citizens without adversely affecting operations."

In the Board of Elections Dept. \$5,100 was budgeted for the election preparation and not used.

In the Register of Deeds Dept. extra was found in office supplies, leases and non-capital expenses totaling \$32,000.

In the Legal Dept. a vacancy will not be filled saving \$30,000.

In the Finance Dept. there is lapse salary money because a position budgeted for the entire year was just filled in November which left \$10,000 unused in that budget.

Information Technology had \$50,000 budgeted for software it can do without.

In the Building and Grounds Dept., a person was budgeted for the new Senior Services Building in the old library which won't be ready in this fiscal year so that leaves \$50,000.

In the Inspections Dept. \$44,500 in computers and uniforms isn't needed.

In the Planning Dept. \$50,000 was set aside to fill a vacancy but that won't be needed this year.

In the Cooperative Extension Dept. a vacancy budgeted at \$25,000 won't be filled.

In the On-site Wastewater Dept., \$118,000 will be saved by not replacing a vehicle or filling a vacancy.

In the Private Drinking Water Dept., not purchasing non-capital equipment will save \$10,000.

In DSS, there is unspent Medicaid money totaling \$100,000.

In the Education Dept., there is \$12,764 extra in the Teachers Supplement budget.

Those proposed cuts equal \$583,264 which leaves \$815,336 which could be taken from the fund balance, but it will bring the fund balance percentage below the county's preferred 25% — but only by a couple of percentage points at 22-23%.

Though interest returns were much lower than in previous years, had the county not had a healthy percentage in the fund balance Southard said it wouldn't have received the returns it did.

Interest returns were down to 1%-3% this year compared to last year's 4.5%-5.5% return.

"If we hadn't had that 25% fund balance we wouldn't have even gotten those percentages," said Horton.

Southard said the county may lose interest but it will not be losing the principal on any of its investments.

Other solutions to revenue shortfalls that may continue include scaling back hours of staff instead of eliminating positions, and considering across the board cuts, including in the Macon County School System.

Rather than raiding the fund balance for the remainder of the shortfall, commissioners also discussed foregoing certain projects budgeted for this year.

Namely, they discussed the EMS/9-1-1/Senior Services project and putting the K-4 School on hold.

Currently EMS and 9-1-1 share cramped out-dated quarters downtown Franklin. The plan is to move EMS out of the downtown building into the current Senior Services Center near Walmart and renovating the old library to house the new Senior Center.

EMS Director Warren Cabe was at the worksession and lobbied hard for the move.

He said both the 9-1-1 department and the EMS department are overcrowded and using outdated equipment which will not be supported by manufacturers in a year or two.

"Expansion of the EMS Dept. is long overdue and has been in the planning stages for over 10 years. Intelligent budgeting over a period of several years have made funds available to cover a significant portion of this project and building labor costs should be favorable as the new year begins. Also using in-house labor would greatly reduce many costs," he said.

The original budget for the project was \$578,000 from the county's General Fund of which \$259,731 was allocated from the 9-1-1 transfer, \$141,000 was designated from the 2007-08 EMS General Fund budget and the remaining \$177,269 was to be included from the General Fund revenues from the current 2008-09 budget.

At the worksession, commissioners agreed that wouldn't be fiscally responsible or fair to the citizens of Macon County to go ahead with the K-4 School at this time.

Due to the current budget shortfall commissioners would have to raise taxes 1.12-1.46 cents to pay for the school depending on the funding scenario.

"This is not the time to be raising taxes," said Commissioner Beale.

However, in light of President-elect Obama's proposed stimulus package for infrastructure, Horton said the county should be "shovel ready" which means final designs should be ready for funding. Shovel-ready projects stand a better chance of being funded by the stimulus package than others.

"Although we desperately need the K-4 project to proceed as planned to provide adequate space and improved conditions for our children, I do understand the rationale behind the actions of the County Commissioners to place the new K-4 school project on hold," said School Superintendent Dan Brigman. "Despite these stressful economic times, our school system's facility needs remain, and our hope is to resume with our plans as soon as confidence is restored in the economy."

— Kim Lewicki

• CLASSIFIEDS •

RED WICKER CHAISE LOUNGE WITH PAD, \$250. Call 526-5056.

5-PC BEDROOM SET C. 1920 Bed/Chest of Drawers/Vanity-style Dresser/Stool/Mirror. Rosewood inlay. Original brass hardware. Good condition. \$995. 828-200-1160 or highlandsnative@yahoo.com

CRAFTSMAN 10" RADIAL ARM SAW WITH STAND. Old but used very little. Excellent working condition. \$150. 828-787-2177.

HEWLETT PACKARD 15" CRT MONITOR in good working condition with all connection cord included. "FREE." Call Randy at 828-488-2193.

COLONIAL GLASS — set of 12 Sherbet 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, full set mint condition, original price \$45 each. Also jewelry call 369-0498. 7-9 p.m.

GEISHA GIRL NIPPON TEAPOT, rattan bails handle circa 1891-1921, Creamer/Covered Sugar Set, Tea set/ rice bowls 369-0498 7-9 p.m.

JEEP RIMS — 17-inch aluminum factory rims off 2005 Jeep Liberty 4x4. Brand new! Complete set of 4 \$800. Valued at \$265 each. Call 706-982-2254.

THREE "HOUSE OF DENMARK" BOOKCASES — walnut, 3' x 6', containing TV, tape player, turn table, radio/CD. Sold as an entertainment unit including 2 Advent speakers. \$550. Call 526-9273.

MISC. ITEMS — Various proof coin sets, old 78 LP, Old Walt Disney movies (never opened); Girls' bicycle; Collectible Basketball Cards (never opened). Call 526-9123.

MASSEY FERGUSON DIESEL DELUXE 35 WITH POWER STEERING. Completely rebuilt, repainted, new tires. Includes scrape blade, and an 8,000 lbs. tandem axle trailer. Sharp Package! \$6,000. Call (828)526-1684 and leave message.

ANTIQUE CHERRY DINING TABLE — drop-leaf, rope carved legs. Seats 4-10 people. \$1,500 obo 828-787-1515

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... BUSINESS NEWS from page 16

drive and parking areas is next on the horizon. Crews will also spread out the large mound of dirt in the front of the building and seed it with grass.

Bridgewrights expect the historic covered bridge to be complete at the end of January. They are currently installing the last rafter trusses and shingling the roof. Crews will start grading on both sides of the bridge as soon as possible.

For more information about the new campus or to purchase an engraved brick or paver, visit www.thebascom.org or call (828) 526-4949, ext. 8#.

Left, bridgewrights expect The Bascom's historic covered bridge entrance to be complete at the end of January. Crews will start grading on both sides of the bridge next.



Photo by Pat Taylor

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• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

The following are the Highlands Police Dept. log entries for Jan. 5-11. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor, or public officials have been used.

Jan. 7

- At 9 a.m., a summons was issued to Carolos Artos Gaona, 22, of Highlands, for driving a vehicle without a license or financial responsibility.

During the week, officers responded to 4 alarm activations.

The following are the Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries for the week of Jan. 7-12

Jan. 7

- The dept. assisted motorists during the snowstorm.
- The dept. responded to a call concerning a vehicle over the bank at U.S. 64 east and Apple Mountain. There were no injuries.

Jan. 10

- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Holt Road. The victim was taken to the hospital.

Jan. 11

- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence in the Highlands Falls Country Club where a man had fallen. He was taken to the hospital and treated for a broken leg.

Jan. 12

- The dept. responded to a call of a vehicle blocking NC 106 south. There wasn't an accident and no one was hurt.

... THANK YOU from page 16

als while making much appreciated contributions to the event. We could not have been luckier than to have Marty and Debbie as our main chefs, and Donna Woods, now Events Director of The Bascom, to make the best dressing we have ever served. Martha Porter baked and donated the delicious rolls we served.

A lot of the preparations was done at Holly Robert's "The Kitchen" where we worked in the days before Christmas to be ready to go on Christmas Day. Jan Zehr of Blackberry Hill Bakery/Deli made and contributed all our wonderful deserts, and Rene Ramsdale supplied the "buckeyes." A meal as good as the one we were promising could only go better with a good glass of wine. Our friends at Wolfgang's on Main and Mountain Fresh both donated the wine that we were able to offer with our meal.

If you want to get the word out on an event, you have to get it in Highlands' Newspaper, The Laurel Magazine, and The Highlander.

Marjorie Fielding, Laurel owner, supplied us with posters, which we promptly placed all over town. We were also on the air on WHLC, so it would be hard to believe that anyone could not have heard what we were up to.

There were so many volunteers that gave up their Christmas Day to work and be with us that there is no way we can properly thank them.

The volunteers include Mark and Chris Flaschner of Atlanta and Highlands Rentals Lakeview Cottages of Highlands, Laura Huerta with The Lakeside Restaurant, the Rosses, Hank and Cathy, The Slades, Geoff Sr., Sue, and Geoff Jr., The Laurel's own Marjorie and Guy Fielding, Helen Tankersly, Helen Moore, Patsy and Chris Mullen, Cindy Propst, Faviola Alevra of The International Friendship Center, Tom Hart, Lisa Wilker, Helene and I, the Siegels of The 4 1/2 Street Inn.

On behalf of H.A.N.D.S., The Highlands Area Non-profit Donation Sharing, all the wonderful volunteers and sponsors, we want to thank all of the Highlanders and visitors who joined us that day for the dinner and contributed financially far beyond the cost of the dinner, thank you, thank you, and we are looking forward to the 2009 edition of the Highlands Annual Christmas Dinner next year.

May we all have a happy, healthy 2009, and we look forward to seeing you then.

Rick Siegel

• FUN & GAMES •

Sudo-Grams[©] 2008

by Pete Sarjeant and Don Cook

OBJECT:

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

How to Solve:

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

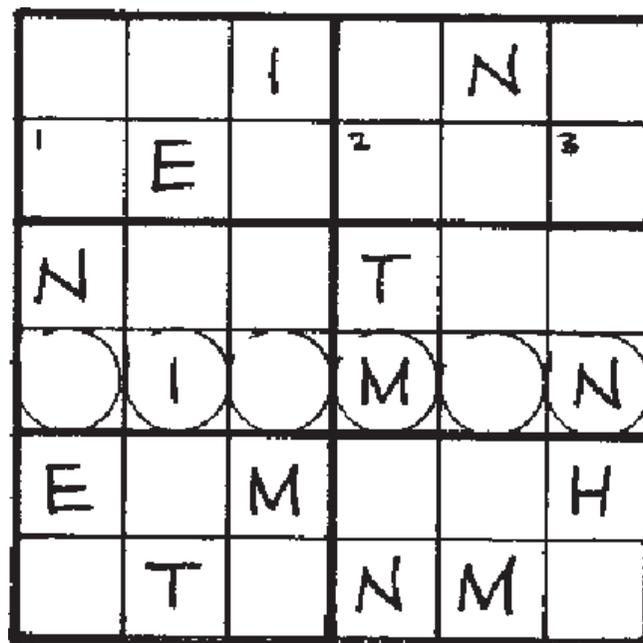
Mystery Word Murderers (6)

Across

1. After nine (3)
2. That one (3)

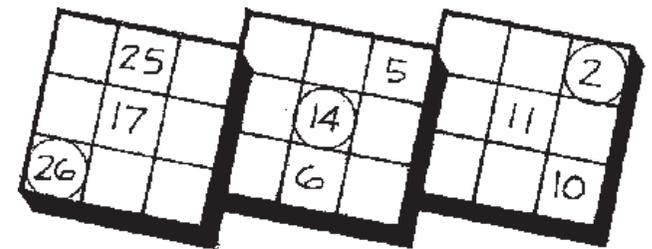
Down

3. Minimum (abbr.) (3)



PseudoCube[©]

by Pete Sarjeant and Don Cook



#DZ1F Level of Difficulty - Moderate

THE SETUP:

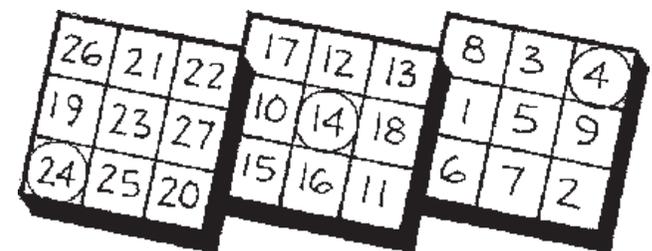
The cube has 27 consecutive numbers in it, arranged in three layers with 9 numbers each. These numbers are arranged in a special pattern: For each layer, the sum of the three numbers in each row, column or diagonal, is 3 times its center number. Eight diagonals connect all 3 layers by running through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

THE CHALLENGE:

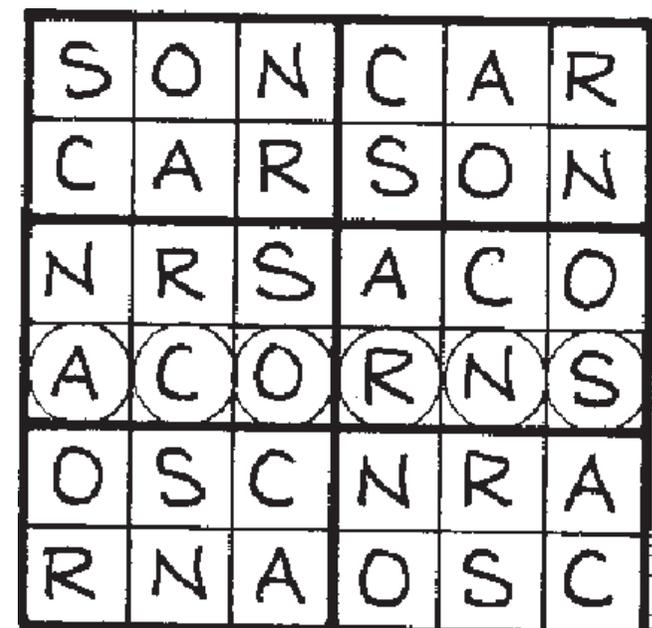
Start with the three center numbers for each layer and the other numbers given. Now pour a cup of coffee, pick up a pencil and eraser and try to figure out where the other numbers belong. Good Luck!

Email: pseudocube8@aol.com.

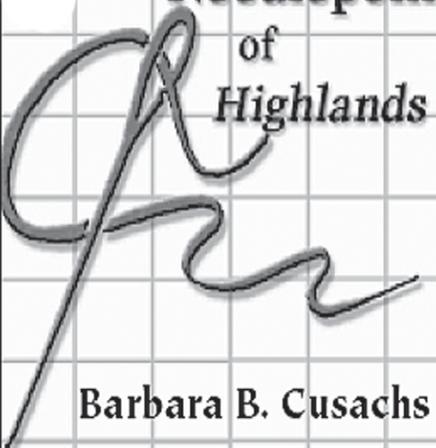
Solution to #BN4F in Jan 8 issue



Solution to Jan. 8 Sudo-Gram



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• UPCOMING EVENTS •

Beginning Jan. 21
• Want to know more about the ethics of food production, distribution and consumption? A study circle will meet monthly through June on the third Wednesday of each month from 6:30 to 8 p.m at the Unitarian Church in Franklin at 85 Sierra Drive. An optional soup supper will be served at 5:30. Cost of the supper is \$5. Preregistration and purchase of the text is required. Deadline for registration is Jan. 4. To register, call 706-782-7978.

Thursday, Jan. 22
• "The English Patient" (1996), directed by Anthony Minghella and based on the novel by Michael Ondaatje, is set in the last days of World War II in an Italian monastery. The nurse Hana (Juliette Binoche) is caring for a badly burned man thought to be English. The mystery of the man is revealed in flash backs. He is the Hungarian Count Laszlo de Almsy (Ralph Fiennes) who meets an English woman (Kristin Scott Thomas) in Cairo. The story is about how they fall in love and how he became "the English patient." The movie won nine Oscars and is in the Library Meeting Room, hosted by the Friends of the Albert Carlton - Cashiers Community Library.

Saturday, Jan. 24
• The Church Communication Network (CCN) and First Christian Church of Franklin brings Manag-

ing Your Money to Franklin on Saturday from 11:30 to 3:30. People across North America will crowd auditoriums, church sanctuaries and halls to learn to walk steadily amid the financial chaos of today's economy! Managing Your Money gives people the practical tools and strategies vital to establishing and maintaining financial health. LIVE via satellite on CCN. First Christian Church is located at 156 Belleview Park Rd. in Franklin, just past the intersection of U.S. 441 Bypass and Highlands Rd. For information and directions, please call the church office at 828-524-6840 or visit the church website at <http://www.fccfranklin.org>.

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 4.5 mile from Sloan Bridge to Upper Whitewater Falls. Meet at the Cashiers Wachovia Bank (in back) at 10 a.m. Drive 14 miles round trip. Bring water, lunch; wear sturdy shoes. Call leaders Mike and Susan Kettles, 742-1079, for reservations. Visitors welcome, but no pets please.

• Blood Drive at the Otto Community Building. Contact Phyllis Castle at 524-9307 for an appointment.

Sunday, Jan. 25
• Audition Notice for "Rumors" by Neil Simon Directed by Donna Cochran at the Performing Arts Center, Highlands. Call Backs if necessary: Monday, January 26, 2009 at PAC. Parts for 5 men and 5 women. Performances Dates: May 7-10 & 14-17, 2009. Scripts at the Highlands and Cashiers libraries for reading. For more information call: Donna Cochran, 828-526-2080.

• First Presbyterian Church old-fashioned hymn-sing at 4 p.m. from the 1938 Cokesbury Hymnal. Song

leader will be Stell Huie and Angie Jenkins will play the piano.

• The Macon County Soccer Club (<http://www.maconsoccer.net>) will host an Entry Level Grade 08 Referee Certification Clinic on Sunday from 9 am to 6 pm. Both sessions must be attended and no late arrivals or early departures are permitted. George Gately with the NC Soccer Referees Association will be conducting the clinic. The cost for the clinic is \$67.00 and payment is due January 18 at registration (checks payable to NCSRA). Lunch will be available for \$5 (or bring your own). Must be 14 years or older by January 25th. Please enroll online. For more information visit <http://www.ncsra.org/> or call Tony Esterwood at 828-524-1928.

Monday, Jan. 26
• Margie Shambaugh, volunteer coordinator at The Bascom, will speak to the Art League of Highlands Monday, Jan. 26, on volunteering at the non-profit art center. The lecture will be held at a luncheon meeting at Peggy Woodruff's home at noon. All Art League members are welcome to attend.

Beginning Monday, Jan. 27
• There will be a 10-week Beth Moore Bible Study, "Esther: It's Tough Being a Woman," in the Highlands School Media Center at 3:45 pm. Going up against heavyweights bent on her destruction, Esther trusted God and landed a blow that saved her people. The Old Testament story of Esther is a profile in courage and contains many modern parallels for today's woman. The cost for each member book is \$16. Carol Bowen is the facilitator. Contact her at 526-5168 to reserve a book.




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HCP to present 'An American Daughter'



The Highlands Cashiers Players announces the cast of "An American Daughter" by Wendy Wasserstein. The cast includes: (seated) Virginia Talbot and Dean Zuch, Stevyn William Amari, Chad Lucas, Carla Gates, Kirk Howard, Marlene Alvarez, Marjorie Fielding. Not pictured: Sandi Trevathan. "An American Daughter" opens Thursday, February 26 and runs, the 27th, 28th and March 1 and continues the next weekend, March 6th, 7th, and 8th. All performances will be at the Performing Arts Center on Chestnut Street in Highlands. Evening performances begin at 7:30pm and Sunday matinees begin at 2:30 pm. "An American Daughter" is a political satire and contains adult language.

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1/2 Off Map Prices For Jan. 2009

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