Mayor Pro Tempore policy hits snag

At Wednesday night's Town Board meeting members learned that amending a procedure to elect the Mayor Pro Tempore and to change the Town Scholarship bylaws may take legislative action.

Though not on the agenda, the issue came up doing the "reports" part of the meeting.

Town Attorney Bill Coward said after consulting the Institute of Government he learned amending the town's charter, whether for the Mayor Pro Tempore or the scholarship procedure requires a local bill.

"A barebones bill can do it but it has to be presented by your legislator," said Coward. The local bill deadline for this session is around May 16.

However, Mayor David Wilkes said more information is needed and he will be in contact with both the League of Municipalities and the Institute of Government next week to discuss it further.

The scholarship part of the town charter doesn't involve the way the money is distributed -- whether by merit and need or equal distribution -- but that's still an issue the board needs to address, said Coward.

Mayor Wilkes asked the School Commission to consider the scholarship part.

• See MAYOR page 7

Work starts on 2011 budget

The first of many 2010-11 budget work sessions took place Thursday, Feb. 11, at the community building.

Commissioners and department heads met with Town Manager Jim Fatland to discuss upcoming capital projects, the state of projects in the works and the possibility of new projects taking form but no decisions were made or votes taken.

Commissioner Dennis DeWolff, who is on the Town Scholarship committee said this year's golf tournament will be at Wildcat Cliffs Country Club and that if what happened last year happens this year only about $20,000 is expected.

Combining the interest earned, some of which was dispersed last year and some raised only $36,500 was dispersed to Highlands School seniors and returning recipients.

Manager Fatland suggested the town consider a target amount, say $46,000, and use interest earned and funds raised instead of dispensing some interest earned and some funds raised to the principal account.

He also said the budget should be ready by June 7, that no new full-time positions would be added in 2010-11 and the town will continue to investigate grant opportunities.

• See BUDGET page 2

Bryson to oppose McClellan at the polls

Time is running out for those interested in throwing their hat in the ring for the upcoming election.

As of Feb. 17, candidates in the District 1 and 2 County Commission races, and the Sheriff race will have some competition.

Incumbent Brian McClellan and previous County Commissioner Alan "Ricky" Bryson are vying for the Highlands area District seat.

The current term is McClellan's first term in office, he unseated Bryson in the last election. Bryson had held the post for two terms.

The County Commission District 2 race has three contenders now, all Democrats; incumbents Ronnie Beale and Bob Simpson, and newcomer Carroll Poindetar.

Republican Sheriff Robert Holland is up against two Democrats - Richard Davis, who was most recently a Highlands Police officer and George Lynch.

Democrat incumbent Clerk of Superior Court McPenny is also running unopposed, as is Democrat incumbent Todd Raby for Register of Deeds.

The last day to file for the Nov. 2, 2010 election is noon, Friday, Feb. 26.

The two-party primary is May 4.

Democrat candidates for Sheriff and Democrat candidates for County Commissioner District 2 will run off at the same time.

- Kim Lewicki

Going for the shot

Last week the girls lost a hard fought match to Hiawassee Dam by three points.

Pictured is Jessica Gagne going for the basket.

For more on Highlands School basketball see page 18.
ties for infrastructure needs.

Gil Technician Matt Shuler, who is the town's point man on the Town Hall renovation, said the move in date is May 1. So far, the job has come in below budget — $450,000 to the $500,000 budgeted — with $186,000 dispersed.

He said part of the renovation includes mirroring software between the Town Hall and the Police Department so there will never be a downtown system failure.

In addition, a new town website is being designed by an intern at Southwestern Community College at no cost to the town. At Shuler's suggestion, the commission discussed using a single logo to represent the town and the chamber of commerce, which, for consistency, could be used on every building, including waysfinding signs around town. A competition is being considered with a cash prize to the winning logo.

Shuler also reported on the proposed Highlands Area Internet Service Provider project, whose original purpose was to supply free wi-fi to visitors to Highlands.

However, though no decision was made after much discussion on the general consensus was the project would cost a lot of money for little gain.

With $1.6 million needed to construct the system, a minimum of 2,400 subscribers paying a monthly fee of $18.94 per month would be needed for the town to break even — and there was talk of a mandate.

However, commissioners Amy Patterson, Gary Drake, and Buz Dotson said the town could not mandate such a thing.

“....

Mayor David Wilkes suggested asking the chamber of commerce if it was interested in backing the project and perhaps asking the downtown businesses to foot the bill.

“Only a small percentage of people would need or use this — primarily visitors to the downtown area who want to use their laptops — so let's kick it to the downtown business community and see if they want to pay for it,” he said.

Town Planner Joe Cooley said the Unified Development Code — which is a consolidation of all the ordinances in the town — will be ready by mid-summer and will be put on the town’s website when completed. “This is a reconciliation and not a document that suggests changes,” he said.

He said the parking study was basically approved by the Planning Board and is going to the Town Board which will work with the newly formed Business Group Committee on the plan. It also includes a system of wayfinding signage throughout town.

At the request of Commissioner Gary Drake, Police Chief Bill Harrell reported on how the Police Department has supplied cars to officers and to allow them to drive them to and from work.

Since at least 49% of the vehicles are used in town on the job, at Manager Fatland's suggestion, Harrell used 51% as the denominator in determining officer usage.

Combining annual maintenance costs at 51% — a total of $8,109 — to annual fuel costs at 51% — a total of $10,373 — the total outlay is $18,482; or $1,541 per month divided by 12 officers for a total monthly cost of $128 per officer.

Commissioner Drake said he wanted it to be understood that he is neither for or against the Police Department having take-home vehicles. “But when citizens ask, I have to have the information to answer,” he said.

Furthermore, recent rumors circulating about certain commissioners and how they feel about the police department and are just that, rumors. People should pay attention to the facts,” he said.

Chief Harrell said take-home police cars have served as a huge recruitment tool.

“Prior to take-home cars, 16 of Highlands Police officers left and went to Jackson County, Macon County, and the Franklin Police Department,” he said. “Each time we have to replace an officer it costs us the $4,000 we spent to outfit them — uniforms, etc.”

He said once take-home cars were offered, turnover stopped immediately.

“We had an 11-man force then which was consistently down to eight because we couldn't keep the seats filled. Now we are up on man, but we are able to maintain a full force.”

The board also learned that take-home cars come in handy when officers are called to assist other agencies once they are home. “We have an inter-local agreement with other agencies, and as soon as our officers respond to an assist call, they are on duty.”

The board also discussed increasing the false alarm fine which will be discussed more at a future date.

HVAC repairs and upgrades are needed at the Rec Park for which a $195,000 grant is being sought.

Revenue from the town's Funds are likely to occur thanks to radio-read meters in the water and electric departments. More usage will be measured with the meters, which means more money for the town.

Town Engineer Lamar Nix discussed the importance of moving the water intake to the Sequoyah Dam and rethinking the town's policy on sewer extensions, particularly in light of the state's mandate on installing grinder pumps and the town being responsible for their upkeep.

He also reiterated the importance of replacing the town's copper wires with aluminum steel core wires to provide stronger tensile strength, which translates to fewer outages.

Finally, Fatland reported that contracts for the Pine Street improvements were in the works and that grant money was likely on its way for stormwater remediation on Laurel, Spruce and Fifth streets.

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Kim Lewicki

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Note to Jim

Dear Editor,

Please run this “Note to Jim” who wrote a letter to me in the Feb. 4 edition of Highlands' Newspaper entitled “It's obvious what Swanson wants.”

Thanks for being a faithful reader. I appreciate that.

Well, Jim, you don’t have it quite right. Frankly, I don’t give a rats patootie if a politician calls himself a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent or a Tootsie Roll. Give me Harry Truman, JFK, Hubert Humphrey, Sam Nunn and others too numerous to mention and I’ll give you Arlen Specter (oops, you already got him), Olympia Snow, Susan Collins, Joseph Cao (he voted for the Obamacare obamarnation) and the whole slew of RINO's who turned away from the party platform and checked their love of country at the door.

I will take time to comment on only one group that you say I want: “Republican mayors in every city, too.”

I’m sure you’ve seen the email that shows the 10 large cities with the highest unemployment. All have Democrat mayors. None have had a Republican mayor for decades, several decades. Some have never had a Republican mayor. Ever. Jiggled stats? Nope. Repressive management. Bad management. L/s/m/d never works. You got the mayor part right, Jim.

Don Swanson
Franklin

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Keeping in touch with Highlands

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the wonderful job of photo journalism. Your photos have kept us up to date on what is happening in Highlands during this extraordinary winter. I check the website daily for current temps and updated photos. Please keep up the good work for all of us who are anxiously waiting for the thaw so that we can return to our mountain homes (but we secretly long to be there now to experience all this winter wonder).

Judy Clifton Steighner
Highlands and Melbourne, FL
Area graduates named to college dean/chancellor lists

**UNC-Greensboro**
Claire E. Frederick, Highlands School Class of 2006, was on the Chancellor's List at UNC-Greensboro for the Fall Semester. To make Chancellor's List, full-time undergraduates must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.65 or above on a possible 4.0. To be eligible, students must be enrolled in at least 12 semester hours of coursework.

**Western Carolina University**
The following area students were named to the Dean's List for the fall semester.
To qualify for the dean's list, students must achieve at least a 3.5 grade point average out of a possible 4.0 on a regular semester's work of not less than 12 hours, excluding remedial courses, with no grade of D or F.
Rachel Earlene Alford
Robert Davidson Edwards
Ezra Patrick Herz
Darin James Keener
Aliaksandr Kikoin
Matthew Preston Neely
Teresa Rose Pearman
Katherine Virginia Pierce
Rebecca Ramey Shuler
Andrew Steven Willhide
Stacy Lynn Wright
Justin Richard Caudell

**Columbia University**
Lucy Herz, a 2007 graduate of Highlands School, was named to the Dean's List for the fall semester. To be eligible, students must achieve a 3.6 GPA.

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This gritty, gripping police drama will be presented in three parts. While the story is true, names and some locations are changed. Some readers may find this material offensive.

On April 12, 1958, Tommy Lee Williams and Madison Ann Knight were born minutes apart at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, Florida.

Jackson Memorial had an excellent reputation and was the hospital of choice for both the rich and poor. Of course, Tommy Lee was born several floors below Madison Ann because of his color. In 1957, black mothers were not permitted to give birth in the same maternity ward as white mothers.

Tommy Lee was born a drug addict; he was a mistake, born to a prostitute drug addict mother. Because of his mother’s addiction, Tommy had to be given immediate detoxification treatments for his heroin addiction.

He and his mother lived in the roughest section of Miami’s Liberty City. His father was an unknown customer. As an infant, Tommy was exposed to open sex between his mother and her johns. As a toddler, he watched his mother use heroin. He didn’t understand the drug use or the sex but took it in stride as a part of a normal life.

At the age of four, Tommy witnessed his mother being beaten by an angry customer. He asked his mother why she was getting beat up. She said, “That’s what happens when you use.” Tommy wanted to stop it but didn’t know how to.

By the time he turned eight he was delivering heroin for his mother’s pimp. He carried a knife and had been taught how to use it. He was experimenting with marijuana and cocaine.

Shortly after his ninth birthday, Tommy’s mother overdosed from drugs and an angry, drunken customer, unable to have sex with her, committed an act of sodomy on Tommy out of revenge. The rape was never reported.

At age 14, Tommy was permanently expelled from school for stabbing another student and three months later his mother was murdered, found in an alley, stabbed to death by an unknown assailant. To this day, that case is an open homicide.

Tommy was placed in the care of a distant cousin in Tampa, Florida, but Tommy never went and the cousin never reported Tommy’s absconced Child Welfare Tommy was living with his mom’s old pimp and was openly dealing drugs. He carried a gun.

By the time he turned 17, Tommy had grown into a tall, six foot, two inch masculine specimen known as “Street Man.” His mamma’s pimp gave Tommy two prostitutes as a birthday gift.

Just over seven miles from Tommy’s one room apartment, Madison Ann lived in one of the finest sections of Miami known as Gables by the Sea. She had two good respectable parents who earned excellent salaries as an attorney and stock broker, respectively. Their choice to have only one child was a mutual one.

At age three, Madison was sent to a private school that, because of her scholastic achievements, she would skip a grade the following year. She was encouraged to take college prep classes at the University of Miami. She accepted the offer and, as part of her life enrichment studies, she worked with other children, share the things she had and to be polite and courteous to everyone.

On her eighth birthday Madison was given a pony and a membership to a nearby polo club. She was blossoming into a gregarious, generous and helpful loving person.

At age 15, Madison was informed by her private school that, because of her scholastic achievements, she would skip a grade the following year. She was encouraged to take college prep classes at the University of Miami. She accepted the offer and, as part of her life enrichment studies, she worked with underprivileged children.

Her mother was promoted to senior law partner and her father was on the board of directors for one of the most respected brokerage houses in Miami. Life was good for the Knight family.

And so the tragedy begins.

Melva shook her head and looked at Tommy. “Ah, I don’t wanna be here. Tommy, I gotta go home. If my mamma knew I was here, she’d beat me into….”

“Shut up, ho, and park yo black butt in that chair and don’t move till I tell you to, ya hear me?” Tommy responded.

Suddenly realizing he had used the wrong approach, he tried to recover. “Come on, Melva, I need you, you’re the only friend I got that I trust. Don’t go home on me till I’m done. Ya hear me when I’m talkin’ to ya?”

Melva folded her arms, pushed out her chest and said, “Ya hear me when I’m talkin’ to ya?”
Where there's a will, there's a way

It's not easy to return to writing about mis-matched socks and atomic clocks. It has been two weeks since my return from Haiti, and the memories haunt me. Of course, I'm happy to be home, to be reunited with Lizzie and Bull, to be back at my lucrative, elective practice in Seneca. But I miss Haiti, her people, their suffering.

When we left, I was content to leave the care of victims of the earthquake to those who would follow. I now realize that we left a job unfinished. It was easy to be in the first wave, when the mission was glamorous. The real work remains to be done. Musicians have gathered and released "We are the World, 25." I cried when I heard it and realized both the enormity of the task and the world's commitment. Those of us who were privileged to be among the first to hit the beach have an obligation to help finish the job.

And what a job it will be Haiti, before the earthquake, was the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. The country lacks roads, electricity, education, political stability, even adequate nutrition and safe drinking water for much of the population. Kids in Haiti still die of typhoid and diarrheal diseases. Tuberculosis, malaria, and HIV/AIDS are widespread, conditions made more devastating by widespread malnutrition.

It is difficult to be optimistic about the future of Haiti. Corruption has robbed the Haitian people of hundreds of millions of dollars intended to help them. Foreign investors are unwilling to bet on Haiti. Asian countries, with political stability and a better educated workforce, offer a better return on investment. There is too little soil to support an agrarian society. Haiti has little choice but to join the global economy, but has had little opportunity to do so. There is a sense of hopelessness in Haiti, a feeling of resignation. If one asks any Haitian his country's greatest needs, he will list reforestation at or near the top. Yet no one plants trees.

There is perhaps no greater indication of the hopelessness of the Haitian people than a frequently expressed desire to be taken over by the United States. Considering Haiti's history of brutal exploitation at the hands of foreign powers, it is an astonishing wish. Christopher Columbus made landfall on Hispaniola, the island Haiti shares with the Dominican Republic. Within a century, there were no survivors of the native people he met. Slaves were brought from Africa to provide labor for French plantations. The descendants of those slaves are the citizens of Haiti today. Their treatment at the hands of their French masters led to revolution and brutal retribution that followed victory. AIDS was spread in Haiti by frolicking Americans, patrons of the sex industry eager to exploit the children of an improved race.

Despite the hopelessness, the Haitian people possess a tough resilience. Despite history and gloomy prospects for success in the future, the world must try.

I have never felt comfortable asking for money. When Bull was a Cub Scout, we didn't permit him to solicit from our friends. We bought popcorn, ate until we couldn't stand the sight of another chocolate covered kernel and gave the rest to friends and family. We have enough Sally Foster gift wrap to paper our house and hundreds of tulip bulbs, I'll never plant. When Bull's school sponsors fund-raisers, we write a check instead of asking for donations from our friends.

Haiti is different. The job is too enormous to be done alone. We were able to rebuild Europe from the rubble of World War II. We can rebuild Haiti. The challenges are different, and in many ways greater. Europe had a history of education and industrialization. Much of the continent had fertile farmland and a long, if imperfect, history of political stability.

Haiti is small. With less than 11,000 square miles, it ranks 147 among the world's countries and is only slightly larger than Massachusetts. Its population before the earthquake was under nine million, less than a million more than New York City. The world can, if it has the will, improve roads, string electric wires, build schools, train teachers, drill deep wells, reforest, eliminate malaria, and provide food and the means to produce it.

The world cannot make wealthy Haitians care about their poor countrymen, can't eliminate the superiority light-skinned Haitians feel over their black brothers, and can't rid the government of the greed and corruption. Those things must be accomplished only by Haiti, if it has the will.

There are many ways to help. Bull is nearing his goal of raising $1,500 for Partners in Health. Anyone who is interested can find his page at http://act.pih.org/page/outreach/view/haiti/earthquake/bull.
Elm Farm Ollie becomes the first cow to fly in an airplane and also the first cow to be milked in an airplane.

I think we’ve all seen a horse fly, so one must really wonder why you’d be so hard pressed to buy the idea of a cow up in the sky? You may think it’s udder folly, but up in the air went Elm Farm Ollie. Yes, they took this very grazer, and very quickly loaded and raised her. Not only was she elevated, a rare event for the ungulated, but while she was aloft, so high and airy, went and milked her for things dairy.

So very rare that aviation is combined with the act of lactation.

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**His & Hers**

My Funny Valentine

By John Armor

Remember those features in Readers Digest, “Laughter is the Best Medicine”? Do they still have that? Does Readers Digest still exist? It was in its day perfect for leaving on the back of the toilet in the bathroom — it had short articles when you were in a hurry; long ones when you were going to stay a while.

But that’s not what I came to talk about. I came to talk about love. Cosmopolitan, and other magazines for unattached women, always feature an article per issue on “Things that drive men wild in bed,” or some other title that means the same thing. Yes, I know, love and sex are entirely too often confused with one another, to the general harm of mankind, one desperate couple at a time. The point is that such magazines offer all sorts of poor advice on how to get together. And stay together. Laughter is the real key. The family that laughs together, stays together. No rhyme, the meter’s off. But the reality is deep.

That does not mean that the man told is a real knee-slapper from Captain Billy’s Whizbang. The woman laughs heartily, and then says, “Now I think we should make love like crazed vessels.” Nothing is that simple. If we were, well all be slim, wealthy, and happy, with all our body parts functioning just fine, thank you very much.

Everyone for whom that statement is remotely true, raise your hands. Let’s not always see the same hands.

I’m not talking about joke-telling. I’m talking about the kind of humor that grows spontaneously out of real situations, looked at with a slanted eye. All of us have a little bit of the Gary Larson in us. Set aside what is normal. Ignore what is expected. Look at any situation like you’ve never seen it before, and cows can stand on their hind legs, drink martinis, and speak plain English. A French poodle named Figi can seize the controls of a burning airplane and “save the day.”

I’ll tell you a secret about the lady with whom I share this column. In addition to being attractive, and smart, and funny, she is terrific in bed. Yes, I know this is a family publication. No, I’m not going to write anything which will offend the sensibilities of the most gracious of our readers. Here’s the plain, unvarnished truth....

Both of us get up once or so each night.

We are elderly. Let me correct that. I am elderly. Michelle is a lady of a certain age. In any event, waking moments should not be wasted. She will say something strange and funny. I will retell it in kind. We will go into a riff of 15 minutes or so. Then, with our sides tired from laughing, we will go back to sleep for the nonce.

Those who know us personally know exactly what I’m talking about. Those who don’t, feel free to go up to Michelle in the supermarket or wherever, and ask her about Mrs. Murphy’s black eye.

You know those obnoxious commercials for pajamas and teddy bears that have infested your cable TV channels in the last week? She told me under no circumstances to even think about giving her anything like that. It HAD to be more thoughtful than that.

So, I put some thought into it. I got a high-tech toilet brush with the flushable, changeable head. And a toaster with nifty controls. Well, that and dinner at Cyprus with the French-style steak. And, a mushy card. I’m dead meat if I don’t get a card that hits the spot.

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How much do I love you? This big. [Holds hands wide apart.] Thanks for the smartly poem in another newspaper that I won’t name, but it’s down in Franklin. I hope everyone fortunate enough to have a Babboo had a happy Valentine’s Day. And, if you don’t have a Babboo, I hope you will have one by next year. It’s hope you will have one by next year. It’s
dead on.

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**About the Author:** John Armor

 practiced law in the US Supreme Court for 33 years. His latest book, on Thomas Paine, will be published this year. www.TheseAreTheTimes.us

Reach him here: John_Armor@aya.yale.edu

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5 ways to fix the NBA All-Star Weekend

Despite drawing over 100,000 people to the All-Star game on Sunday night, the NBA saw lukewarm ratings and limited hoopla over its most recent all-star experience. With that being said, if you happened to catch any of the events (and judging by the ratings you didn't) then you would realize that it was yawning-inducing throughout. Therefore, here are five things that NBA commissioner David Stern could do to make things much more entertaining.

1. Make the outcome of the All-Star Game for homecourt in the NBA finals. After all, Major League Baseball has done this with some mild success, and it would make the game much more meaningful in the long run. At the end of this year's game, the players were fouling on purpose to prevent overtime, win or lose. This puts off average fans and only furthers the image of NBA players as spoiled athletes. If the game truly counts for homecourt, then there would be an incentive to compete.

2. Make the celebrity game a true celebrity game. This year the "celebrities" consisted of former NBA players and some people we had never heard of. If the game was made up of celebrities only, and some big names were convinced to play for charity it would certainly encourage more people to tune in. If Stern really had some stroke, he could try and talk President Obama into playing and increase his ratings by 1,000 percent. (I just chuckled out loud at the thought of Obama playing on TV. We could get Sean Hannity, Glenn Beck and Keith Olbermann to provide commentary and it would be hilarious. Hannity would report that there was a referee conspiracy to benefit the President and claiming that Obama only going left is destroying America. Olbermann would be bringing back his old Sportscaster catchphrases and praising Obama for "managing the game"and Beck...well Beck would be weeping uncontrollably throughout the broadcast. If you are wondering about Chris Matthews, he would be unavailable for commentary because of a prior commitment to be Obama's towel boy!)

3. Get rid of the Skills Challenge...ugh. Also, once four-wheelers use the road, it becomes impossible to hike due to the ruts which fill with ice and snow, she said. "If hikers can't use it, we are producing all but four-wheelers use the road."

4. Fix the Dunk Contest. This is the number one issue with the NBA weekend. I WILL TYPE THIS IN ALL CAPS FOR EMPHASIS!!! FIX THE DUNK CONTEST. (Hah, it's like am shouting...but on paper) People don't want to see Nate Robinson and Demar Derozan in a dunk contest -- they want to see LeBron, Carmelo and D-Wade in a dunk contest. David Stern, pay these men...offer them a million dollars to compete. If that doesn't work, then fine or suspend them if they don't compete (as the NFL does with the Pro Bowl). LeBron James is the greatest athlete in the world today -- he does dunks in games that people can't do in contests. There is no reason for this man not to be out there. So come on Stern, make it happen.

5. The board agreed to allow Town Engineer Lamar Nix to make a judgment call during winter weather and to either use signage or a more permanent means to keep vehicles off the road. Town Manager Jim Fatlin reported that since part of Highlands is in Jackson County, and since Jackson County was in a declared state of national emergency back in January, Highlands is eligible for federal mitigation funds. That money will be used to mitigate stormwater problems on Horse Cove Road and Sixth Street - long time problem areas in town.

In addition, the town will be reimbursed for tree and snow removal, contractor and equipment expenses, as well as employee overtime during these storms due to the "state" emergency declaration. The board unanimously agreed to the Duke Transmission Agreement - the second cog in the wheel to supply power to Highlands.

Kevin O'Donnell, with NOVA, the town's energy consultant, said that though buying power is unregulated, transmitting that power is fully regulated. An agreement must be in place before Duke can supply Highlands its power.

The town and Duke signed a 20-year agreement concurrent with the town's power supply agreement with Duke which begins in March and will add an extra $1 per month to the typical resident's utility bill.

The board OK'd the agreement contingent upon the Town Engineer, Town Attorney, Town Manager, and the town's energy consultant agreeing to details.

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The end of the great snow job
While sifting through the news the other day, I spotted something about RFK Jr.’s comments on Washington DC’s weather. Jr. has always fascinated me so I pursued it.

What caused my fascination was, although a spokesman for some radical environmental organizations, he seemed to have a difficult timespeaking.

So I found that the Washington Examiner had exhumed an interview with Kennedy from 15 months ago wherein he commented on the fact that, when he was a kid, he had the neighbor buddies over to the Washington area estate to enjoy sliding down their hill. Oh, the good old days. But, hesadly continued, times have changed, winter has gone south and snow in DC is but a distant memory.

Curiously, we haven’t heard Jr.’s explanation of the record breaking snow-falls that would have restored Flexible Flying down local hills, a tempting pastime except the little buggers can’t trudge up the slopes due to excessive snow accumulation. Digging a little deeper (pun intended) I found some interesting facts about Teddy’s nephew.

To my surprise Jr. had a radio show on Air America, the used-to-be voice of US liberalism. The surprise wasn’t that he was preaching his wacko message, but radio just didn’t seem to be the most effective media for doing so. I found that he had a condition known as spasmodic dysphonia which causes his voice to sound weak and sounding like he’s choking up. Strange, I thought, for an on-air person.

I always felt that his voice problems resulted from his heroin use. You probably missed the news story that he was arrested in the Rapid City Airport toting 183 milligrams of heroin in his carry-on bag. I’m no expert on these things, but that sounds like a lot to me. Evidently, the lessons learned in bailing Teddy out of his Chappaquiddick problems worked for Robert as well. Two years probation was his sentence.

Back to Air America. Evidently the progressive liberals felt the major television networks and major big-city newspapers touting their line wasn’t enough. They saw the success Limbaugh, Hannity and others were having and decided they wanted some of that. Unfortunately for them, listeners weren’t listening.

After two years of finagling, they started programming March 31, 2004, just in time for April Fool’s Day. With now-Senator (I’m still in denial) Al Franken as one of their mainstays, they thrashed around for a while and got nowhere.

To make a long story short, Air America filed Chapter 7 and, in case you didn’t notice, ceased broadcasting in January. I assume that ends Kennedy’s curious radio career. Just as I was hoping the snow-apocalypse of 2010 ended the global warming crock, some weird scientist types says, “There, that proves it.” That proves what? “These huge blizzard-type snowfalls prove the planet is warming.”

Really? “Yup. Just look at Vancouver. No snow there and it’s warm, to boot.”

OK, so the ocean currents keep it warm, just like they keep San Francisco cool.

Does Vancouver offset snow falling in all the contiguous 48? I don’t think so.

Look, the libertarian/conservative/conservative/progressive – and that’s the last time I’m going to spell it out) has not given up on cap-and-trade, which is the only reason I brought up the subject in the first place.

The bull-headed leadership in this country has been paid so much by those who will benefit greatly by such a scheme that they are willing to throw their own under the bus. I would be willing to bet that anyone voting for cap-and-trade will either retire (wealthy) or get pounded out of office.

Do you ever wonder why some politicians do strange things?

Harry Reid is a perfect example of committing political suicide, knowing the pot at the end of his rainbow awaits.

Area politicians should take note. I hope you get your share because if you vote for cap-and-trade legislation (again), it’s over.
NEW POLICY

For-Profit Businesses and NonProfit Organizations requesting Promotional or Press Release space, must agree to an advertising arrangement. Without an arrangement, only a listing in the upcoming events calendar will appear for NonProfits but no listing will be accepted for For-Profit Business events.

To request ad rates and a publication calendar, email highlandsed@aol.com

SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
Mondays at 5 p.m.

Photographic Works by Greg Newington
opens Friday at The Bascom

The first exhibition in the U.S. of works by award-winning Australian photographer Greg Newington will open at The Bascom this Friday, Feb. 19.

The exhibition, “Photographic Works by Greg Newington,” continues in the ground floor of The Bascom’s main building Mondays through Fridays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., through March 7. Admission is free. Enter the building from the rear.

Newington has worked as a photographer/editor in Australia and the Middle East for over 38 years. He worked extensively in the field as a news photographer and photojournalist. His news photography won an Australian Press Photographer of the Year award in 1988, and his photo illustrations won second and third prizes in the 2002 Nikon Australia National Press Awards. He currently works from his gallery and studio in The Serene community in Georgia and in Adelaide and Sydney in Australia.

Students also have the opportunity to learn under Newington this month when The Bascom offers a one-and-a-half day field/studio workshop. The workshop, “Winter Light – Using Light, Composition and Texture in Photography,” is for all levels of students and will be offered in two different slots: Feb. 27, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Feb. 28, 1-4 p.m., or March 1, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and March 2, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The workshop will help students gain an understanding of the role of natural light when composing color or black and white photographs.

Workshop pre-registration is required. Cost is $150 for Bascom members and $175 for non-members.

For information call (828) 526-4949.
Ongoing and Upcoming Events

Mountains in Bloom garden festival to feature tours, flower show, lecture, parties

Event raises funds for Bascom art education and exhibition programs

Over 1,000 garden and nature lovers from across the region will gather July 8-11 for the 12th annual Mountains in Bloom garden festival. Mountains in Bloom features tours of five majestic mountain gardens in the Bowery Road area of Highlands, a flower show and photography competition, a home and garden market, a flower-themed lecture and demonstration by Beverly Reese Church, and an exclusive Benefactors Party. All proceeds benefit exhibition and education programs of The Bascom, a nonprofit center for the visual arts that recently occupied a stunning new $13 million campus in Highlands.

The event starts Thursday, July 8, with a flower-themed lecture illustrated with five table settings showcasing the creative ideas of New Orleans author, designer, and magazine editor Beverly Reese Church. On Friday and Saturday, July 9 and 10, attendees have their pick of garden-inspired activities: tours of five outstanding gardens in the Bowery Road area of Highlands, a flower show and photography competition and a free home and garden market featuring the best in live plant material and distinctive items for the garden, porch, patio and home. Attendees will be shuttled from convenient parking sites to the event venues.

On Saturday night, July 10, all Mountains in Bloom attendees are invited to a party at The Bascom to view a related exhibition, “Heroes of Horticulture,” and enjoy a demonstration by Bascom artist-in-residence Susan Knight Smith on the art of pastel painting. On Sunday, July 11, benefactors of the event will top off the weekend with a gala “England in Highlands” Benefactors Party at the estate of Cathy and Bob Fisher.

“During the Mountains in Bloom garden festival in July, Highlands, North Carolina, is a spectacular place for anyone who loves flowers, gardens and the outdoors,” said Minnie Bob Campbell, co-chair with Louise Demetriou, of Mountains in Bloom. “From beautifully designed and cultivated gardens to the lush native flora and fauna, it’s the place to be for people who love nature.”

Platinum sponsor of the event is Northern Trust. Bronze sponsors include Franklin Ford, The Laurel, Lupoli Construction, Moss/Robertson Cadillac and WNC magazine. Tickets are on sale now at www.mountainsinbloom.com or by calling (828) 526-4949 ext. 120.

Photo by Mike Hunter. This year’s Mountains in Bloom will feature a tour of five gardens in the Bowery Road area of Highlands, including the garden of Linda and Tom Gunnigle, above. Set for July 8-11, Mountains in Bloom also features a flower show and photography competition, a home and garden market, a flower-themed lecture and demonstration by Beverly Reese Church, and an exclusive Benefactors Party. Tickets are on sale now at www.mountainsinbloom.com or by calling (828) 526-4949 ext. 120.
Food Pantry available for ‘emergency food’ or weekly groceries

The food pantry located on Spring Street is open each Monday afternoon from 3:30-5:30 p.m. It is operated by volunteers who come from every church in the community and the community at large. It is sponsored by The International Friendship Center and Highlands United Methodist Church and is open to anyone in the area who needs food on a regular basis or in an emergency situation. The pantry is arranged like a grocery store and is open to anyone in the area who needs food on a regular basis or in an emergency situation. The pantry is open every Monday from 3:00-5:00 p.m. There is no charge for the food, but donations are always welcome. There are many dedicated volunteers who give their time and effort, but more are always needed. There are many ways to help. Each week, food is unpacked and placed on the shelves by a team of volunteers. Others unpack and prepare items for display. The pantry is open every Monday from 3:00-5:00 p.m.
Ongoing and Upcoming Events

Rick Siegel has acted with the Highlands Cashiers Players before, but he is wearing a new hat these days as director of the upcoming HCP production, "Dixie Swim Club." The following is an interview between Rick and an inquisitive friend.

Q. When did you first become interested in theater?
A. I never gave it a thought until 2006. Ronnie Spilton was casting for "Remember Mama" and asked me to audition for a small part. I auditioned, got the part, and the rest, as they say, is history. I was hooked!

Q. I have seen you in several HCP productions, most recently "Rumors" by Neil Simon. What do you like about performing?
A. It’s a challenge. Memorizing lines, learning blocking, i.e., moving to specific places on the stage for specific lines while blocking out distractions like the audience, lights, the movements of other actors on stage; it all makes you work.

A huge upside to performing is the people you work with. The other performers, all the production people. There is a lot of fun that goes into rehearsing and putting on a performance.

Q. How many productions have you appeared in? What were they?
A. I’ve been in 5 since "Mama." There were "California Suite," "How the Other Half Loves," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," "A Thousand Clowns," and "Rumors."

Q. Do you have a favorite role? Why is it your favorite?
A. That would be a "toss up." I loved playing "Hysterium" in "Forum." I got to sing poorly as it may have been, and dance. And to work with 23 other very special performers, what fun we had! The other would be doing "Lenny Ganz" in "Rumors" where I really got to "ham it up." But I never had any part in any play, big or small, that I did not have fun doing.

Q. Why did you become interested in directing?
A. While doing all these different and varied roles and working with different directors, seeing other plays, I saw things that actors and directors did to thought were cool, and things I thought I might do differently. Directing gives one a chance to test those ideas.

Q. That seems to me to be a difficult job. How did you learn to direct?
A. Directing is a trial and error process. You plan it out, try it, look at it, tweak it until you get the feel you are looking for. You are always trying to refine it until it is a coherent story that keeps the audience’s attention.

HCP, The Highlands Cashiers Players, has had a program over the last few years, open to anyone interested. It is a primer course, the basics of directing. HCP also plans on having follow-up courses that get into a wider range of the aspects of direction.

Q. Other than telling the actors what to do on stage, what are a director’s responsibilities?
A. There is a long list of things a director has to do, as a director and I thought going in. Basically, the director is responsible for making sure everything goes as it happens. Not necessarily doing everything yourself, but making sure everything gets done. Putting together the production crew, a set designer, set decorator, getting a sound and light design and people to operate the “boards” a prop gather, a costume, hair stylist, dressers, the list could take up the rest of this paper. Everything that makes up the production of a play is ultimately the responsibility of the director.

Q. "Dixie Swim Club" is an all-female cast and deals with the relationships of these women. I’m intrigued that a man would choose this particular play to direct. What was the appeal?
A. Friendship and loyalty are characteristics that are shared by the women of this play, and I was intrigued by the characteristics that are shared by both sexes.

Reading the play, the story spoke to me about those characteristics and I thought it would be fun to try to bring the play to life.

Q. I’ve got a loaded question for you now. Have you gained any new insight into female behavior and the working of the female mind from this play? If so, what?
A. Not really. There is a constant trait that is shared by everyone involved in a production, and that is to put on a good show. So all the men, the women there are, and women of "Dixie" are pretty much on the same page. We don’t always agree with another, but we all seem to be pulling in the same direction.

Q. It sounds as if women will really enjoy "Dixie Swim Club." What about the men in the audience?
A. I think men who see "Dixie" will come away entertained. The story is universal, the humor and sarcasm is timely, and poignant moments will pull at men just as hard as women.

Q. What are the dates for the performances?
A. We open with the reception performance on Thursday evening, February 25, and continue Friday the 26 and Saturday the 27, Sunday matinees February 28. And again on Friday, March 5; Saturday, March 6; and another Sunday matinee on March 7. Evening performances begin at 7:30 pm; Sunday matinees begin at 2:30 pm. The Box Office opens Thursday, February 18 for Season Subscribers, and Saturday, February 20 for the general public. Call: 828-526-8084

Opening Night Reception after the performance, Thursday, February 25, Catered by Oak Street Café. "The Dixie Swim Club" is sponsored in part by Dr. Robert Buchanan, The Center for Plastic Surgery and Scott Neumann, Law Office PLLC.

To register, call (828) 526-4949 or call www.thebascom.org.

Tues.-Fri., May 25-28
• Karen Weihs will teach an oil painting workshop, "Still Life: Out of the Garden," at The Bascom for all levels. Cost is $400 Bascom members, $425 non-members. Registration is going on now.

Tues.-Fri., May 25-28
• Joe Frank McKee will teach a ceramics workshop, "Advanced Throwing Techniques," at The Bascom for non-beginner to advanced students. Cost is $375 Bascom members, $400 non-members. Registration is going on now. To register, call (828) 526-4949 ext. 100 or visit www.thebascom.org.

June 17-July 3
• At Highlands Playhouse, "Smokejoe’s Cafe," a musical, theater revue, featuring 40 of the greatest songs. For tickets call 828-526-2695 or go to www.highlandspayhouse.org.

July 8-11
• The 12th annual Mountains in Bloom garden festival is July 8-11 in Highlands, N.C. Events include tours of five majestic mountain gardens in the Bowery Road area of Highlands, a flower show and photography competition, a home and garden market, a flower-themed lecture and demonstration by Beverly Reese Church, and an exclusive Benefactors Party. Proceeds benefit exhibition and education programs of The Bascom, a nonprofit center for the visual arts. Tickets are on sale now at www.mountainsinbloom.com or (828) 526-4949.

July 8-18
• At Highlands Playhouse, "Sylvia" by A.R. Gurney. A comedy about a dog and the couple who adopts her. For tickets call 828-526-2695 or go to www.highlandspayhouse.org.

July 22-Aug. 8
• At Highlands Playhouse, "The Andrews Brothers," a USO show in the South Pacific full of mistaken identities and madcap adventures. For tickets call 828-526-2695 or go to www.highlandspayhouse.org.

Aug. 12-22
• At Highlands Playhouse, "Lettice & Lovage," a comedic play. For tickets call 828-526-2695 or go to www.highlandspayhouse.org.
Voluntary sacrifice is good

LAST WEEKEND MARKED THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE WEEKEND I HAD TO CANCEL SUNDAY MASS AT OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS. THIS WINTER HAS BEEN SO SEVERE WE’VE HAD THESE EXTENDED PERIODS OF BELOW FREEZING TEMPERATURES. WE’VE ALSO HAD MORE SNOW THAN WE’VE SEEN IN QUITE A WHILE, I UNDERSTAND.

Some tell me this is a harbinger back to winters many years ago when the schools were closed for the entire month of January. Others tell me that it is a sign of the reality of climate change. Whatever the cause, it does leave us wondering what is necessary for our spiritual development. That is, gathering to worship, to give thanks, to receive the blessings of God through the community of faith.

The danger of losing these opportunities is the loss of a personal prayer and the mistaken belief that all that is necessary for salvation is personal belief. Without community we lose the instrument through which God makes his presence known and communicates his love to us. I hope that all of you have survived this period of separation and that the weather will enable us to gather as a community of faith again.

Since I write this on the Monday prior to its publication I cannot predict whether we will have celebrated Ash Wednesday yesterday or not. This is the beginning of the season of Lent which is a time of voluntary sacrifice. Remember Jesus’ 40 days of fasting in the desert. We recall Jesus’ sacrifice for our salvation. We remember our mortality. We receive ashes on our foreheads as a sign of this. We hear the words “Remember you are dust and to dust you will return.” Or the words which are more to the point, “Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel.” It is an opportunity for personal examination and evaluation. How have we been living our faith?

The church offers three things in this season to help. It calls for more communal prayer opportunities and invites more time for personal prayer. It asks for fasting on two days (Ash Wednesday and Good Friday) and abstinence from eating meat each Friday of Lent. It seeks to inspire generous giving (alms).

At Our Lady of the Mountains, to facilitate these we will offer The Way of the Cross, a communal prayer each Friday at 5:30 p.m. followed by a simple, meatless soup supper brought by the participants. We’ll have daily devotional books for personal prayer. Catholic Relief Services conducts its Operation Rice Bowl program during Lent. We will have small cardboard boxes available to take home for monetary contributions in support of CRS and their mission to help the poor.

These sufferings of winter lead to the joys of spring. The suffering and death of Jesus lead to his resurrection from the dead. So too may this time of voluntary sacrifice that Lent provides increase our joy in the resurrection we will celebrate this Easter.
Above, Mountain Garden Club members meet at the Highlands Nature Center.

Mountain Garden Club gives back to the community

Mountain Garden Club recently donated more than $8,600 to local nonprofit organizations for further horticulture and conservation. The Highlands community makes donations like these possible by supporting the annual Mountain Garden Club Plant Sale held each year on Memorial Day weekend.

The recent donations went to The Highlands Biological Foundation to help pay for replacing the boardwalks at the Botanical Garden and for two scholarships for local children to attend the summer camp program at the Nature Center.

The Highlands Plateau Audubon Society received funds to help with the Annual Meeting of the N.C. Audubon Society, which will be held on May 20-23 at The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center.

The Highlands Plateau Greenway received funds to help revegetate at key points along the Greenway and for materials for building two wooden footbridges on Big Bear Pen.

Monies were donated to The Garden Club of North Carolina for scholarships provided for the students who major in horticulture and related fields.

Save the date for the 2010 Mountain Garden Club Plant Sale on Saturday, May 29, starting at 9 a.m. Place is the ball field on Highway 64.

Police & Fire Reports

The following are the Highlands Police Dept. log entries from Feb. 4. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor, or public officials have been used.

Feb. 4
- At 1 p.m., the larceny of various tools was reported but the situation was resolved between the homeowner and the contractor.
- The dept. responded to a two-vehicle accident on Azalea Circle and Hickory Hill Drive.

Feb. 5
- At 12:14 p.m., a deceased person was found in her bed at her residence on Wilson Road. She died of natural causes.

Feb. 6
- At 1:41 p.m., the dept. received a 9-1-1 hang-up call from a residence on Main Street.
- At 11:30 a.m., the dept. responded to a two-vehicle accident on U.S. 64 and S. 2nd streets.
- At 5:40 p.m., the dept. received a call for service concerning an open door with a key in the lock at a residence on Wingina Place.

Feb. 15
- At 7:33 p.m., officers assisted a stranded motorist on Hicks Road.
- During the week, police officers responded to 7 alarms and issued 4 citations.

The following are the Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries from Feb. 11:

Feb. 11
- At 2:27 p.m., the dept. responded to an alarm on Main Street. It was canceled.
- At 5:54 p.m., the dept. responded to an alarm at a residence on Bowery Road. It was false.

Feb. 12
- At 3:06 p.m. the dept. responded to a call of a person lying in a ditch on Turtle Pond Road. The call was canceled.
- At 4:27 p.m., the dept. responded to several cars that slid off roads, a jackknifed tractor-trailer near the hospital, and stranded motorists.

Feb. 13
- At 12:12 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a situation. See POLICE & FIRE page 3

...WOOLDRIDGE continued from page 4

bottom lip and gave Tommy the dirtiest look she could muster.

"Why don't you get one of your ho's to do this instead of me all the time?" Melva asked.

"I told you before, baby, I don't trust them ho's," Tommy responded. "If I black out, they'd havemy kid and begone. I'll give you a fink to stay. How's that, baby cakes?"

Melva stared into her lap, deep in thought. Then she extended her hand without looking up and Tommy pulled a five dollar bill from a large wedge of money and handed it to her. She took the bill, crumpled it into her palm and shoved it in her pocket in one swift motion.

"All right, this is the last time, Tommy. I mean it," Melva said. "I'm scared to be here. You gotta find someone else, ya hear?"

"OK, baby, this is the last time. Just be cool," Tommy shot back.

"Yeah, you said that last time and here I am again."

Ignoring her comment, Tommy reached into a small dresser drawer in the corner of his filthy bedroom. A trail of dried vomit ran across the linoleum floor to a nearby toilet.

The room smelled of body odor and Tommy's bed lacked linens and his pillow was filthy.

Tommy pulled a small stainless steel syringe from the dresser. He smiled and held it up so Melva could get a good look.

"What is that, you ain't using a throwaway anymore?" Melva asked.

"Nah baby, ya can't boot good with a throwaway. Rico told me this is some boss skag so I'm gonna boot this till my momma gets here."

Ignoring her comment, Tommy reached for the throwaway syringe and loaded it with the concoction back into his vein and called out, "OK, baby, this is the last time. Just be cool."

"Remember now, if something does happen, no pigs, you hear me….no pigs! You gonna find someone else, ya hear?"

"OK, baby, this is the last time. Just be cool."

Ignoring her comment, Tommy reached into a small dresser drawer in the corner of his filthy bedroom. A trail of dried vomit ran across the linoleum floor to a nearby toilet.

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The following are the Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries from Feb. 11:

Feb. 11
- At 8:27 p.m., officers responded to a disturbance on a residence on Main Street. It was canceled.
- At 3:27 a.m., officers responded to a residence on Hicks Road. It was canceled.
- At 3:30 a.m., officers responded to a residence on Hicks Road. It was canceled.
- At 6:45 a.m., the dept. responded to a call of a person lying in a ditch on Turtle Pond Road. The call was canceled.

Feb. 12
- At 3:06 p.m. the dept. responded to a call of a person lying in a ditch on Turtle Pond Road. The call was canceled.
- At 4:27 p.m., the dept. responded to several cars that slid off roads, a jackknifed tractor-trailer near the hospital, and stranded motorists.

Feb. 13
- At 12:12 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a situation. See POLICE & FIRE page 3
NON-COMMERCIAL CLASSIFIEDS:
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NEW POLICY

CERTIFIED SCRUB TECH at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Immediate need. Will except RN with scrub experience in orthopedic, general, and plastic surgery. Pre-employment screening required. Call Human Resources at 828-526-1376 or apply online at www.hchospital.org

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LOST IN TOWN on Dec. 30 - black leather glove with silver buckle. Return appreciated. Michele@mead.com

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ITEMS FOR SALE

PIANO — Gorgeous Fully restored. Late 1900's upright owned by the Vanderbells and was in the

CLASSIFIEDS •

Mid-Winter Community “Garage” Sale at Highlands Rec Park

Saturday, March 6

Come sell your household and yard items from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Call Cindy Batson at 526-9310 about booth space.

ITEMS FOR SALE

2005 BOBCAT 334 G SERIES -- Enclosed cab/heater. 120 hours. Asking: $21,500 OBO. Call 526-5793 (st. 12/30)

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ICE AND SNOW REMOVAL, Call 526-2251 or 342-6299. (3/31)

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Cold weather survival tips

With hazardous winter weather being nearly a weekly occurrence this season, the health professionals at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital offer suggestions for precautions to take regarding health and safety issues. "I have seen a recent increase in ER visits that can be attributed to trips and falls caused by the inclement weather. The worse time to go outside or travel is as the ice begins to melt. Broken bones are occurring during daily activities and are definitely weather related this time of the year," said Dr. John Baumrucker, MD at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. The simple task of filling up your bird feeder on your deck can cause painful injuries. Decks are similar to bridges, with the cold underneath, they freeze and stay frozen much longer than other surfaces.

There are several ways to lessen the risk of falls when walking outside. Make sure your shoes have rough soles, and try to walk only on cleared paths. Whenever possible use hand rails and carry a shoulder bag or back pack enabling hands to remain free. "Keeping a wide stance and moving slowly can help prevent trips and falls," said Baumrucker.

Winter storms can bring significant and sometimes rapid changes in the weather which greatly affects our safety. Residents should take precautions as they venture outside during bad weather conditions. Try to stay dry, dress warmly and with several layers of loose fitting clothing. Wearing inner layers of clothing made with materials such as wool, silk and polypropylene can hold more heat than other cotton garments.

With the bitterly cold season we have seen, residents should also take precautions to stay healthy. Weakened immune systems caused by typical colds and infections can leave our bodies susceptible to serious medical conditions. "Although flu season is not quite over, Highlands and the surrounding communities have seen little flu activity in the recent months," said Cindy B. Coley, RN and Infection Control Director at HCH. "As always, frequent hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of germs and flu viruses. Avoiding anyone who is sick, staying at home if you are sick, and practicing respiratory etiquette (covering your mouth when you cough, disposing of used tissues in trashcans and washing your hands with soap and water or using the alcohol based hand sanitizers) are helpful practices to keep you healthy."

"We urge residents over the age of 65 to be especially cautious, the body's ability to feel changes in temperature lessens with age, and older adults are more inclined to acquire health problems caused by the cold," said Coley.

Highlands-Cashiers Hospital encourages residents, especially during times of wintry weather, to stay warm and inside. Remember to use proper safety measures if going outside in inclement conditions. "In all circumstances, our staff is here 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to meet the needs of our community members. Our goal is being the healthcare partner to whom our community citizens can entrust their lives," said Frank Leslie, interim CEO.

HealthTracks celebrates 'Cardiac Rehabilitation Week'

February is Heart Health Month, and the HealthTracks team at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital's wellness and fitness department have much to celebrate during Cardiac Rehabilitation Week.

Since the hospital began its own cardiac rehabilitation program in 1994, it has helped hundreds of patients recover from heart attacks and cardiac surgery, and aided others in managing chronic cardiovascular disease. The goal of the program is to allow patients to recover as much quality of life as possible and to reduce the risk of reoccurrence of their coronary illness.

Ray McDonough paused from his exercise for a moment to share his experience. "After nine months of joining the cardiac program, I was able to return to work on my 34 acre tree farm," said Ray. "In 2008, I suffered a severe heart attack, which doctors say I barely survived. My wife and I were celebrating our 50th wedding anniversary, when I began to feel to chest pain I became unconscious in minutes. My next memory was awaking in the ER at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. The emergency staff stabilized me, administered TNK a "clot buster", and had me flown by helicopter to Mission." "Since my heart attack, I have participated in the cardiac rehab program, exercising two hours a day, three days a week. The program helped me to recover and regain strength, health and a feeling of wellbeing," said McDonough.

"The combination of the immediate emergency care I received at HCH, and the cardiac rehabilitation after hospitalization, not only saved my life, but helped restore my quality of life."

The cardiac rehab program first obtained national certification by the AACVPR (Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation) nine years ago. The AACVPR is a national, multi-disciplinary association dedicated to the improvement of clinical practice, promotion of scientific inquiry, and advancement of education for the benefit of cardiovascular and pulmonary rehabilitation professionals and the patients they serve. Certification recognizes those programs that are rigorously reviewed by a national board and found to meet the essential requirements for standards of care.

Local family physician, Dr. Richard Mattews, MD, who recently open up his family practice says the hospital should be proud of the program. "I'm impressed with the cardiac program that Director Yvonne Smith, and her team have here. It's one of the best I've seen, even when compared to many large hospitals," said Dr. Matthews.

In addition to cardiac rehabilitation, HealthTracks also offers a variety of fitness and exercise programs aimed at the general public. Among the offerings are monitored and independent exercise programs for otherwise healthy individuals, stretching and balance programs, personal training, weight loss classes, yoga, Pilates, and tobacco cessation programs. HealthTracks is located on the lower level of the Jane Woodruff Medical Building, on the hospital campus.

About Highlands-Cashiers Hospital

"HCH is a community hospital that provides diagnostic, surgical and acute patient care to the public through on-site professional services, or as a referral to regional support providers. Our emergency care facility is Physician-staffed 24/7 and treats patients promptly, monitoring their visit with personal care and attention. We make the extra effort to assure that you get "best of class care", and feel "special" every time you pass through our doors. HCH also provides Physician Clinics, a skilled Nursing Facility, Hospice Care, Skilled Rehabilitation, and Medically-Based Wellness Programs allowing individuals and families nearby access to professional care in these critical areas. The hospital continues to expand its programs to provide the broadest possible range of quality healthcare. Our Board-Certified Physician Staff continues to grow to better serve you, as do our medical specialties now covering 18 areas of healthcare, specialties usually only found in much larger facilities. We continually update our range of diagnostic procedures by adding new state-of-the-art equipment."

Our goal is to be the healthcare partner to whom you can entrust your life.
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177 Main St. (Wright Sq.) Highlands
Highlanders teams split at home with Hiawassee Dam

By Ryan Potts

The last three times the Lady Highlanders have played the Lady Eagles of Hiawassee Dam, the game went down to the wire. Unfortunately, for the Lady Highlanders, the result has been three straight rounds of heartbreak, as they dropped another close one at home 51-48.

This time, the Lady Highlanders kept the game close throughout, with no team leading by more than 6 points. After two free throws gave the Highlanders a 2-point lead with 24 seconds to play, Hiawassee Dam senior Amber Boring (0-6 in the game at that point from behind the arc) hit a three-pointer to put the Lady Eagles up a point.

After a timeout, Highlands ran a perfect inbounds play for Emily Munger, but she was blocked by Kareen Abling and Hiawassee Dam added two free-throws for the final margin. Taylor Buras scored 12, and Emily Munger added 17 for the Lady Highlanders.

The Highlander boys had dealt with heartbreak of their own earlier this year, blowing a 9-point fourth quarter lead at Hiawassee Dam in January. Thursday, the Highlanders made sure that the game was never in doubt. Highlands used pressure defense and a relentless offense to take a 13-point halftime lead and led by as many as 28 points in the second half in an 80-60 victory.

Highlands had four players in double figures, with Michael Shearl leading the way by scoring 22 points. Josh Delacruz added another double-double with 15 points and 11 rebounds. Robbie Vanderbilt scored 13 and Logan Schmitt chipped in 11 points for the Highlanders.

Highlands will play Thursday and Friday at Blue Ridge in the Smoky Mountain Conference tournament. Due to the weather, gametimes are subject to change.

Junior Josh Delacruz at the Hiawassee game.

Photo by Noel Atherton
Cajun Cook-Off
Feb. 20 - Community Bld.
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