Town Board eyes fiscal responsibility

With fiscal responsibility in mind, the Town Board may not be as quick to say "yes" to funding requests as in the past. At the Jan. 20 Town Board meeting, commissioners said yes and no to requests from the Chamber of Commerce and asked Police Chief Bill Harrel and Town Manager Jim Fatland to come to the budget workshop on next week with specifics on the police department fleet.

Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Bob Kieltyka requested an equal partnership with the Town—beginning in 2010 and going forward—to fund the annual Fourth of July fireworks display. He said July 4th is one of the three busiest commercial days, not the busiest, and it's the Chamber's hope the fireworks can continue.

However, new 2010 licensing—now in the works—involve the tightening of certification and logistical requirements at the state and federal level concerning the controls of explosives including how they are stored, secured and handled.

East Coast Pyrotechnics, which has been the contractor for the job for the past three years at the cost of $5,500, can handle the new requirements with a turnkey contract of $10,000.

"At this level they will provide the appropriately licensed and certified technical team, an increase in fireworks for a larger show, liability insurance and all the logistical support for storing, transporting and handling of the product," said Kieltyka. "However, the Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center can't handle the expenditure alone."

The Chamber proposed a 50/50 partnership with the town at $5,000 each and suggested requesting third-party donations from the business community, with donations equally divided between the town and the Chamber to reduce the overall cost.

He said members of Highlands Rotary indicated that it would donate some money to the cause. Though commissioners acknowledged the need to continue.

PB charged with ordinances

On Monday, Jan. 25, the Town Board and the Planning Board had a joint meeting to discuss upcoming ordinances and "job" parameters.

Most of the two-hour meeting was spent discussing the scope of, importance of, and need for a Stormwater Ordinance as presented by JP Johns with McGill Engineering.

As required by law, the Town Board sends all proposed ordinances to the Planning Board for its consideration, but it's the Town Board that has the final say.

Though the Planning Board doesn't have teeth, its participation in the formation of ordinances is considered important, and often times helps define the final draft of an ordinance.

Lately, however, the Planning Board hasn't acted on the charges put forth by the Town Board—most recently dealing with the Abandoned Structure Ordinance but also the long-awaited Stormwater Ordinance.

Snow days threaten school days

Issues concerning the Macon County School calendar continue to surface. At the Monday, Jan. 25 school board meeting, questions were asked about school being open on Election Day and the lack of snow days in the current and 2010-11 school calendar.

Pat Davis, Testing and Accountability Coordinator, said she has been in contact with the Macon County Board of Elections concerning school and elections going on at the same time.

"It is their prerogative whether to close schools and they have said they have no problem with it," she said. "Since only three of our 12 schools are used as polling places, closing schools didn't seem necessary." She also said Early Voting options now available to Macon County citizens have changed the dynamics of polling places.

Superintendent Dan Brigman said this time of year inclement weather continues to threaten the continuity of school in the county.

State mandates demand students attend 180 days of instruction. School not extend past June 10, that teacher workdays follow each grading period and that Saturday makeup days take place the week of the missed day.

"Since the state says students..."
The road to Haiti and beyond

Dr. Henry Salzarulo

Anesthesiologist Dr. Henry Salzarulo and his partner in practice from Seneca, SC are still in Haiti working with Partners in Health.

He expects to return to Highlands Saturday, Jan 30. What follows are more accounts of the reality that is Haiti.

"No one is to blame. The earthquake is to blame."

That is the mantra of our team, as face each day. Work on. I've lost track of time. My watch says it's the 22nd. Who am I to argue? Far from improving, the situation here grows only more desperate. It has been more than a week since the earthquake. Our medical team arrived the following Saturday. Then natural history of massive extremity trauma is that they get worse each day unless treated. The body yields to overwhelming infection. Surgical and medical wound-care, frequently including amputation, saves lives.

We are in Ste. Marc, Haiti, in a wretched hospital, in a tropical country. I can only assume that what we have experienced has been repeated throughout the country. Specifically, what we are experiencing is death, the death of our patients. Five died yesterday. Two of them were under my care. It was a bad day. I was up all night with a patient. When our team reassessed her this morning we made a terrible, but inescapable decision. We had no choice but to let her die to preserve limited resources for patients with a chance to survive.

It is estimated that as many as 250,000 people may die as a result of Haiti's quake. Two hundred thirty thousand died in the tsunami in 2004. Those were from a dozen countries around the Indian Ocean. Before the quake the population of Haiti was about eight million. We've lost our share.

Fragmentary reports from other hospitals suggest that our experience is typical.

I wrote those words a week ago. Shocked by the unexplained deaths of two of my patients, and drained by 24 hours without sleep, I sat dazed at my keyboard. I fell asleep writing, went to bed and awoke three hours later. I summoned our driver and told him I had to return to the hospital, return to duty, assist my colleagues and aid my patients.

It is calmer now. There were deaths today. We're starting reconstructive procedures. We left the hospital on Saturday instead of the 11th. I can organize my thoughts, pick up fragments of things I wrote in the early days, add flesh and make sense of what the Haitian people have suffered and what we have accomplished. I was not to blame. No one was to blame. The earthquake was to blame.

To continue...

A sense of normalcy is returning to our little bit of Haiti. Fewer patients are dying. It has been several days since we've done an amputation. Yesterday we started happy surgery — reconstruction. We placed external fixation devices on open fractures and applied plates and screws to closed fractures. We still change many wound dressings each day, but the wounds are cleaner now. The stench of infection is leaving the wards.

The United States Marines visited us yesterday, and they were a sight for sore eyes. They were so polite, so professional, and so helpful. They offered us supplies. The explained that their helicopters were at our disposal to evacuate patients that required greater intensity than we could deliver. If these guys are representative of Marines, then America is well served by the Corps. The memory of their pressed fates, crew-cut heads, and smiling faces will remain with me forever. "And Sir," the ranking officer, a full colonel said to me, "if you don't need us or don't want us around, we'll clear out." We told them we needed their help, primarily to evacuate patients to the hospital ship, Comfort, which was an anchor in the harbor. Colonel Pete addressed a junior officer, "There's a soccer field in town. Check it out as an LZ (landing zone)." They moved 11 of our sickest patients yesterday, and have offered continued assistance as long as we need it. My hat is off to these guys. My thanks to the Corps.

In my many trips to Haiti I have come to expect the affection and gratitude which the people of Haiti display. In the past I had worked only in the Partners in Health hospital in Cange. Dr. Paul Farmer started a clinic in Cange more than 25 years ago. Everyone adores Paul and there is ample remaining love for his staff and volunteers. St. Marc is different. Partners in Health became involved with the hospital here only very recently. There is friction between the Haitian staff and the new employees. Partners in Health wants only to improve the care available to the Haitian people, but changes are viewed with suspicion and resentment.

At the time the earthquake shook the ad-
ministrator had been on duty only one
week. Then we came and St. Marc shook. The
operating rooms were dirty and dysfunctional. Patients were dirty. Wound
dressings had not been changed since they
had been applied. There was a smell of
death and rotting flesh throughout the hos-
pital. We pushed for improvement, perhaps
a little too aggressively. The staff withdrew.
We augmented a number of limbs to save
patients’ lives.

Haitians are as attached to their ex-
tremities as anybody else, perhaps more so,
and with good reason. Life is hard in Haiti
with two good legs. With one, life becomes
nearly impossible. Word spread among the
patients, perhaps fanned by a recent staff,
that we had come to cut off arms and legs.
A Haitian doctor promised patients that he
could salvage their limbs. When we made
ward rounds, our smiles were repaid with
scowls. People were afraid of us. The rela-
tionship has improved and will continue to
get better as we rebuild injured Haitians.
We are greeted by fewer scowls and a few
smiles. The kids look forward to their dress-
ing unsalvageable limbs, we were called for
operations two or three days after our arrival. Peo-
ple, mostly families of the injured, were up-
set that we had not yet treated their loved
ones’ injuries. We worked 14-hour days,
creating an environment fit for habitation,
before we could perform the first operation.

The facility was filthy. Two operating
rooms sat unused and not cleaned. Our sur-
groups examined and prioritized the in-
jured. There were five anesthesia machines
at the hospital, none of which was func-
tional. With help of a biomedical engineer
from Port au Prince, we managed to get two
machines working. He beamed when I told
him that I worked in Seneca, SC and lived
in Highlands, NC. He explained that he
had visited Dr. Harry Morse in Anderson.
Members of our team searched through an
on-site storeroom where they found a trove
of donated, but unused equipment — stuff
had been piling up for years, equip-
ment we needed to care for the injured.

We had all assumed that we would be
sent to a functional hospital. We were
shocked by what we found. The place was
filthy and crowded. Most of the patients
were lying on thin pads on the floor, mat-
tresses so closely placed that we could not
reach a patient without stepping on his and
his neighbors’ bed. Wound dressings had
not been changed. Loving family members
fanned their loved ones and awed away
flies in the un-air-conditioned sweat box.
Few of the wards had electric lighting.
When fluorescent tubes failed, they were
not replaced. It required a major effort to
clean and organize the areas, but on Mon-
day we started operating. It was a magnifi-
cent effort by all concerned, including our
hosts who needed only guidance.

Each day we have operated well into
the night. At the end of one very long day
of debriing dead infected tissue and amputat-
ing unsalvageable limbs, we were called for
an emergency Cesarian section. A beauti-
ful baby boy was born. In away he was a
metaphor of Haiti. He was limp and pro-
foundly depressed, but he needed only a lit-
tle help before he began to breathe. His first
luscious cry came a few minutes later. Amid all
the death and destruction, Haiti had
brought new life, just as new life sprouts
from the roots of a tree broken in a hurri-
cane. There is hope after all.

Haiti needs help. If you want to be in-
volv ed, I ask that you contribute generously.
There are a number of approved charities
that are doing wonderful work in Haiti. I sug-
gest you make your checks to Partners
in Health, www.PH.org. Many churches in
both Highlands and in Anderson, Clem-
son, Seneca, SC are also involved in this
historic effort. Thank you for your help.

Dr. Henry Salzarulo

Hop for Haiti!

Here is a local opportunity for you to
show your support for Haiti! Jane Chalker,
Head of Church’s local Haiti Mission
Group, is taking a mission team of six indi-
viduals to Haiti in mid-February. The local
mission is connected to a school and hos-
pital in Cange, which is a two-hour drive
north of Port-au-Prince. They did not re-
ceive much damage, so medical refugees
are arriving daily.

A fundraiser is being held on Friday,
Feb. 5 from 7-11pm at the Highlands
School Old Gym. This is a “Sock Hop”
dance and party, with the price of admis-
sion a monetary donation and/or a dona-
tion of toiletry items. The monetary dona-
tions will go primarily to support Partners
in Health, which operates the hospital in
Cange. This event is for the whole family,
featuring song requests, line dancing, disco
lights, a snack bar, and authentic Haitian-
made items that will be for sale.

Pictures of Cange and the people being
supported will also be on display. Please
come out and “Hop for Haiti” on Friday,
Feb. 5 from 7-11pm. If you need more in-
formation or would like to volunteer for
the event, please call Mike Murphy at 526-1841.

Emily Murphy

Relief comes in many forms

Everyone is aware of the current situa-
tion in Haiti. I know that we are all proud
to be Americans and that our government
has been so quickly responsive. I also know
that many of us are overwhelmed with the
number of different agencies that are help-
ing in Haiti.

To continue...

As you know by now, I writing from
Ste. Marc, a coastal town in Southern Hait,
about an hour drive from the capital, Port
au Prince. I arrived here one week ago to-
day, attached to a medical relief team made
up primarily of physicians and nurses from
Harvard affiliated hospitals.

I never considered not coming to Haiti
following the devastating earthquake near-
ly two weeks ago. The only question was
how to hitch a ride. There was, and re-
mains, no commercial air service into or
out of Port au Prince. I called a friend at
Partners in Health who was kind enough to
attach me to the Harvard group as their an-
esthesiologist.

I don’t have much of an idea what’s go-
ing on in the capital. One of our surgeons
travels there frequently to search through
mountains of gear at the airport. He usu-
ally delights us with the supplies he is able
to find. Sometimes it is stuff that actually be-
longs to us. More often he picks through
shipments sent to Haiti by a world that
grieves for Haiti. He met a US Army Ranger
who responded to a question about vio-
We've just returned to our ship from the port of Civitavecchia, Italy, where we spent the morning trying to communicate with merchants along the port. Remember, when there's a complete and total communication breakdown, always speak Indian... loud Indian.

“How much necklace?” the li'l missus asked, holding up the jewelry. The merchant held up a numbers of fingers, each one amounting to one Euro. For 15 Euros, they bring in a family member. When the item is a $300, more Indian talk is necessary along with even more family members.

We weren't able to find anyone dumb enough to take our li'l left over from our last trip to Italy, but we had Euros left from Lisbon that were burning a hole in our pockets. The li'l missus went into a shopping frenzy.

Because it's a sunny Saturday with 52-degree weather, merchants came to the port, set up their tents along the main drag and offered their baubles to tourists hungry for a bargain. It was a fun, low-key day.

More exciting, though, was Wynn and John Cleaveland and celebrated their 39th wedding anniversary. They took an early morning tour bus to Rome to visit the Coliseum, the Sistine Chapel and, of course, toss three coins in the famous Trevi Fountain. They had a fantastic time, and our table of eight toasted them. After dinner, Wynn and John Cleaveland celebrated their fortieth. We didn't go with them.

Sunday Brunch 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Lunch: 11-3 everyday
Dinner: 5 until every night except Sunday
Cy Timmons Live Friday & Saturday 6 ‘til closing
A giver in our midst

For this article, I decided to interview community servant and friend of mine, David Long. David has done many acts of service in our community and I thought to ask him a few questions about it. If you see David in town or at Kilwin’s, serving you ice cream, be sure to thank him for all he has done.

Q: David, I heard that you recently raised about $400 for the food pantry with a chocolate bunny? Tell us about that.
A: Actually it was a 22 lb Milk Chocolate Santa that was generously donated by Kilwin’s. Jerry Moore, owner of Kilwin’s thought that selling Raffle tickets for the Santa would be a fun way to raise money for the Food Pantry and he asked me if I would like to coordinate the raffle. I said sure and rounded up local youth to help sell tickets and spread the word. Tickets went on sale Thanksgiving weekend and by December 24th (the day of the drawing) we ended up raising over $450 dollars that went directly to the Food Pantry. Others donated supplies such as the tickets, flyers and pictures. By the way, Dr. Scott Baker was the lucky ticket holder.

Q: That sounds very cool. It seems as if you’ve done a lot of volunteer and service work. When did you begin volunteering?
A: I don’t really remember. I think with my family and involvement in our church gave me lots of opportunities to help others. Also, living in a small community makes it easy to want to help your neighbor.

Q: So, why do you feel the need to volunteer when you do?
A: I was raised to look for ways to think of others first so as ‘vegotten older I sometimes try to see when something needs to be done and if I feel like I can do it then I’ll try and follow through. I guess at first I did things because I was told to but as my faith has grown I am understanding more that as Christians we are called to serve. I have found that serving not only brings joy to those you are helping but I’ve found that it is a lot of fun and meaningful for me.

Q: So, last year, at least I believe it was last year or the year before, I remember you and your mother and some homeschoolers would go down to the Blue Ridge School for the Kindergarteners. Do you still do that?
A: We actually don’t anymore, but we have been talking to Mrs. Christy and there’s maybe a couple of things we may be helping her with in the near future. We have done a few things for her class. But, just little projects with which we just tried to help her out.

Q: I see. So, could you describe them?
A: We packed up, let me think, it was a long time ago since we helped her, when she taught fourth grade we gathered a bunch of books and things, we made some things for her kindergarten class, as I think you remember, and we gave them to her at the end of the year.

Q: So, are you involved in doing any upcoming messages or works?
A: I am not sure yet. I have been looking for maybe a couple opportunities to help right now. But right now nothing much has come up.

Q: Nothing much? OK. So, what do you think about the whole Haiti thing? All that’s happened right now and if you could be involved, how would you help down there?
A: I would try to see if I could raise some money, and maybe get it to a good organization that can help. I can see a lot of good that’s going on right now, through it all. I’d try my best to see if I can find something to do. Suggestions have been to raise money, and probably something that I would try to do is just send money to organizations that are helping down there right now.

Q: You also mentioned earlier that you believe that your Christian faith is really inspiring you to do these works and volunteer. Tell us a little more about that.
A: Well, like it says in the Bible, the great Commission is where Jesus tells his Disciples to spread the news about his life and his story and how he came to save mankind. That is a great example of how as Christians we need to be willing to help others, and to practice what we preach. And volunteering is a great example that you need to be able to lend a helping hand whenever necessary, and that is showing a lot of Christ, and as Jesus said, “Do unto others as you would have done to you.”

I had a great time interviewing David, and I hope his story inspires you. If you would like to talk to David about community service and getting down and dirty for others, you may E-Mail him at grdnr.davis@gmail.com

Feedback is encouraged. Gardner Davis
Breaking in the New Year

By Michelle A. Mead-Armor

I used to make a cruel joke at my ex-mother-in-law’s expense. Her name was Yvonne, and she was born in the village of Nuits Saint Georges, an area in Burgundy famous for remarkable (mostly) red wines. When people would ask about her, I would simply sigh and state, “She’s from Nuits Saint Georges. It wasn’t a good year.”

Having a bad year isn’t limited to us common folk, though. In November, 1992, Queen Elizabeth II uttered the phrase heard round the world, “1992 is not a year on which I shall look back with undiluted pleasure.” In the words of one of my more sympathetic correspondents, it has turned out to be an Annus Horribilis. At the time, I was shocked. After all, I didn’t do Latin in school. I just thought she’d sat on the throne too long.

In all fairness, however, the Queen did have reason to gripe. Three of her children separated or divorced. One daughter-in-law came out with a scandalous tell-all book, while another made the front page cartooning with a gentleman (I use the term loosely, as did he) not her husband. On top of all that, Windsor Castle—her favorite—caught fire in November. I hate it when that happens. For such a reserved woman, this confession was tantamount to appearing on Oprah. While I may “be good to be the King,” it certainly isn’t good to be the Queen. Not in 1992, at least.

This brings me to the question, is there such a thing as a bad year, or a good year? 2009 was certainly a stinker for my family. In February, Maman fell and broke her arm. In July, she fell again, this time breaking her hip and elbow. In July, as well, my nephew had a life-threatening heart incident, which normally has a 5% survival rate. He made it, part of the lucky 5%. As the year advanced, I remember thinking to myself, “What else can go wrong?” All I wanted was to see the back of 2009, and make a fresh start in 2010. So, has the New Year brought us the joy and hope we so desperately needed? Don’t bet on it.

After a wonderful December at Chestnut Hill, we drove Maman back to her retirement facility. In Virginia. This year? 2009 was certainly a stinker for my family. In February, Maman fell and broke her arm. In July, she fell again, this time breaking her hip and elbow. In July, as well, my nephew had a life-threatening heart incident, which normally has a 5% survival rate. He made it, part of the lucky 5%. As the year advanced, I remember thinking to myself, “What else can go wrong?” All I wanted was to see the back of 2009, and make a fresh start in 2010. So, has the New Year brought us the joy and hope we so desperately needed? Don’t bet on it.

Fortunately, the Big Thaw came. Our pipes unfroze, but a water leak brought Drew to the rescue. Upon reflection, I might recommend to ladies who have not had the Plumber to the rescue. Upon reflection, I might recommend to ladies who have not made all of our worries look small and petty.

But, for three blissful days of warm beds and running water.

This is a woman who has her priorities straight. Fortunately, the nice doctor who had done the hip and elbow surgery in July was operating the next day, and by mid-afternoon, they were wheeling Maman into surgery. Everything went well, and that evening she was back in her room recuperating. In the words of her surgeon, Dr. Pereles (pronounced “peerless”), “Mrs. Mead, I’ve done your right hip. You are out of hips.”

We’ve had our share of excitement here in Highlands, too. Sue, our cat sitter, warned us of the water situation when we were still in Virginia. We returned home to find no water, and in a house that normally has no central heating, bitter cold. It was like living in a refrigerator, except that the light stayed on when you closed the door. Weight-bearing exercise is supposed to be good for your health, and I sure got enough of it lugging logs into the house. We have two built-in fireplaces, and a number of Franklin stoves (of course), so the demand for firewood is enormous. The wood pile, which looked like it would last for 30 years, suddenly appeared half-empty. Day after day, we slugged on. Lee, the best friend you could ask for, kindly let us shower at her place. So did Ted, John’s poker buddy and the talented jeweler responsible for my engagement and wedding bands. It’s not always like this you find out who your real friends are. We hauled water up from Dusty’s well, flushed the toilets. Actually, we’d done this routine before, but in the dead of summer. Doing it in winter coats and gloves was more difficult. Finally, we moved into Mitchell’s,for three blissful days of warm beds and running water.

Fortunately, the Big Thaw came. Our pipes unfroze, but a water leak brought Drew to the rescue. Upon reflection, I might recommend to ladies who have not yet chosen a husband to marry a plumber, not a lawyer. Seeing how Drew is worked off his feet these days, I wonder how much his family sees of him. He is a kind and decent man, and definitely in my personal Hall of Heroes.

And then the real disaster came, which made all of our worries look small and petty in comparison—Haiti. My heart broke for these people who have so little to begin with. The misery and destruction is so enormous to comprehend. I watched in astonishment one night on ABC as the opening story was the election of a Republican to the Senate seat previously held by the late Ted Kennedy. The second story that night? How a dog was...
Five things I learned on Sunday

1. Dave and Buster’s is a TERRIFIC place to take your kid on gameday. Dozens of TV’s with football on all throughout the place, plus the food is pretty good as well. I was able to watch/listen to almost all of the Jets-Colts matchup while simultaneously attempting to run Brionna around in hopes of an early bedtime. (That bedtime attempt was futile by the way)

2. Rain plus frizzy hair plus Saints football equals crazy man appearance. I thought the pizza guy was going to brown his pants when I answered the door on Sunday. He looked so frightened, I actually gave him a largertip because I thought I had done something wrong or something. Then I looked in the mirror and realized that a 6’8” man with hair like Ace Ventura (at the mental hospital) wearing a tattered old Saints shirt was probably a disturbing image for even the most seasoned delivery professional.

3. Every time I watch football on Fox I wonder about the little dancing football robot that they have on the screen. When they come back from commercial, Ok, I was just kidding about that last part…sort of) Yup, children have a target demographic for the dancing football robot.

4. Amazingly enough, I was able to put football in perspective Sunday night. After Brionna informed me that (for approximately the 3,196th time) that Vikings kicker Ryan Longwell has the same name as her daddy, I told Brionna that Mr. Longwell was about to “make daddy very upset” during the Vikings final drive. Without missing a beat, Brionna asked “am I gonna get a timeout?” (me “of course not honey…unless you cheer for the purple team. Ok, I was just kidding about that last part…sort of) Yup, children have a special way of helping us keep perspective.

5. I honestly believe that Joe Buck wants to have a child with Brett Favre. Not in a vulgar sort of way, but more in a “hey Brett Favre is the greatest/toughest/most wonderful man ever and he would be the perfect choice to raise our adopted son” type of way. I was concerned that maybe I thought that Buck’s adoration of Favre was seen through Saints colored glasses, but after scouring the internet, I found plenty of unbiased observers that agree with my assessment of a potential Favre-Buck loved child.

Game Analysis

Obviously turnovers were the story, as the Vikings dominated the stat column but lost the turnover battle 5-1. That total could very well have been 7-1 had the Saints simply fallen on a couple of fumbles that they tried to advance and instead allowed Minnesota to recover. Sean Payton really pucked up for the Saints in the second half, as his playcalling became very vanilla and a little bit chick-hearted. Fortunately, the defense came up with turnovers, and then despite some close calls in OT the offense did just enough to get in position. I told a friend of mine earlier this year that I had a lot of confidence in Garrett Hartley as our kicker, and he made it look easy at the end, as that FG would have been true from 65 yards.

Favre Analysis

I must admit that I have always respected Favre–my annoyance stems more from the media’s coverage of him than from the guy himself. I do think he’s a drama queen in a sense, but you can’t take anything away from his ability on the football field. On that last interception, Favre HAD to throw that ball somewhere. Despite what he said, if Favre runs that ball he picks it up a yard or 2 at best and Minnesota is looking at a 56 yard FG. (Longwell’s career long was 54) If Favre simply throws the ball away then it is a 58 yard FG and likely OT. Favre tried to make a play and failed, but the real fault lies with Brad Childress, because if you are planning on a 55 yard FG then you need to run the ball, pick up 3 yards and kick the FG rather than calling a passplay. In Closing

Wow…my team is in the Super Bowl.

... SNOW DAYS from 1 can’t go to school for six days in row, Saturdays only work well as make-up days if inclement weather doesn’t keep students from going to school on Saturday.” He said if Saturdays are knocked out of the scenario this winter, then make-up days will have to be taken from Spring Break – which is set for April 2-9.

“Parents need to make plans for that scenario because it could be the only choice if Saturdays can’t be used as make-up days,” he said.

Davie also said preliminary results suggest a great deal of improvement in End-of- Course Tests which were given last week. She said the state’s decision to allow students scoring less than a 3 out of the 1-4 rating to immediately retake the test saw scores increase dramatically.

“In addition, the state accepts the higher score which is a benefit to students and to the schools,” she said.

The March BOE meeting is in Highlands.

- Kim Lewicki

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Favre Analysis

I must admit that I have always respected Favre–my annoyance stems more from the media’s coverage of him than from the guy himself. I do think he’s a drama queen in a sense, but you can’t take anything away from his ability on the football field. On that last interception, Favre HAD to throw that ball somewhere. Despite what he said, if Favre runs that ball he picks it up a yard or 2 at best and Minnesota is looking at a 56 yard FG. (Longwell’s career long was 54) If Favre simply throws the ball away then it is a 58 yard FG and likely OT. Favre tried to make a play and failed, but the real fault lies with Brad Childress, because if you are planning on a 55 yard FG then you need to run the ball, pick up 3 yards and kick the FG rather than calling a passplay. In Closing

Wow…my team is in the Super Bowl.

... SNOW DAYS from 1 can’t go to school for six days in row, Saturdays only work well as make-up days if inclement weather doesn’t keep students from going to school on Saturday.” He said if Saturdays are knocked out of the scenario this winter, then make-up days will have to be taken from Spring Break – which is set for April 2-9.

“Parents need to make plans for that scenario because it could be the only choice if Saturdays can’t be used as make-up days,” he said.

Davie also said preliminary results suggest a great deal of improvement in End-of- Course Tests which were given last week. She said the state’s decision to allow students scoring less than a 3 out of the 1-4 rating to immediately retake the test saw scores increase dramatically.

“In addition, the state accepts the higher score which is a benefit to students and to the schools,” she said.

The March BOE meeting is in Highlands.

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Mr. Brown Comes To Town

Several months ago, Coakley ahead by 31 in the Polls.

"Did you hear something?"

"Nope, I didn't hear anything."

"There, did you hear that?"

"No, what did it sound like?"

"It was a loud noise that whooshed."

"Nope, I didn't hear anything."

A few weeks later, Polls say Coakley leads by 20.

"Did you hear that?"

"I think I did hear something."

"It sounds like a quiet whoosh."

"I wonder what that is?"

"Beats me."

A few weeks later, Coakley leads by 9.

"Man, what is that? It gets louder and louder."

"I don't know, but it's a whoosh."

Several days later. Coakley by 5.

"That racket is really getting loud."

"I know. I can't figure out what's making that noise."

A couple of days later. Coakley leads by 2.

"That is definitely a whoosh and now the ground is shaking."

"Something big is happening. I wonder what's going on?"

The next day. It's EVEN.

"Man, this is getting exciting."

"Yes, it is."

The next day. BROWN LEADS!

"This is big."

"This is very big."

The next day. BROWN WINS!

That whooshing noise - it was a huge breath of fresh air blowing through the political system. It may even breathe life into the Republican Party if it pays attention and gets down to the business the people hired them to do.

And the shaking - it was Washington getting turned upside down. Pelosi looks funeral because even though she said we will pass healthcare legislation no matter what, the next day, evidently reality penetrated her coconut and she actually admitted that she didn't have the votes to get the Senate's version through the House.

So the disgusting Al Franken, once the 60th vote in the Senate that made them filibuster-proof, now becomes the 59th vote, and the potential hammerlock the Dems had over our government is gone. Not that Obama's agenda was getting done, even though the machinery was all his. I'm writing this a few days before Obama's first State of the Union message and would I hate to be his speechwriter. One of the first things he did, just hours after his election in, was to declare that Guantanamo would be closed within a year. No it wasn't, and probably won't. He ordered Congress to have sweeping health-care legislation by the summer races last year. Didn't happen. The deadline was pushed forward in painful increments, and, in each case, the deadlines were missed, and now, it's just plain dead, at least for the time being. His stimulus plan has been a colossal failure.

He went to Copenhagen to bring home the 2016 Olympics to his shady Chicago buddies. He brought back fourth place (out of four). He went to Virginia to help Democrat Creigh Deeds get elected Governor. Didn't happen. He went to New Jersey to help Democrat Corzine get reelected Governor. Didn't happen. He went back to Copenhagen to move serious global warming on again. Didn't happen. Cap and trade appears dead. Went to Massachusetts to help Martha Coakley win Teddy Kennedy's Senate seat. Didn't happen.

The Tea Party people were instrumental in helping elect Scott Brown. They will be working nonstop from now until November to elect real people to office. The current bunch of politicians are making noises that they are starting to get it. We'll see about that. One thing seems certain. Obama won't stop making trips to accomplish things that are futile, even though his advisors tell him not to. His massive ego won't allow it.

Most of the members of the Planning Board are in the building trades and are understandably wary of any ordinance that could curtail or constrain such livelihoods - that is, add cost to projects. However, since a state-mandated stormwater ordinance is in the pipeline, the town wants to have an ordinance in place that applies to Highlands rather than risk an ordinance outlined by the state. It is now in its fourth draft with little input from the Planning Board.

"It's not the job of the Planning Board to decide whether we need an ordinance, it's to have input and help fine tune the ordinances we want," said Mayor David Wilkes.

Board member Ricky Bryson still questioned the need for a stormwater ordinance. 

"Don't we have state and county ordinances now and inspectors who will check on illegal discharges?"

Commissioner Amy Patterson said its best to have a local ordinance. "What about the situation on NC 106 south where there was that septic discharge going on? It took several weeks for county inspectors to come. We need a local ordinance in place because it's local that sees things and can call so we can take care of things ourselves," she said.

Since much of the two hours was taken up by the joint meeting, and since the Planning Board still had to consider changes to the Temporary Real Estate Development Sign Ordinance, members decided to take a hard look at the Stormwater Ordinance at its Feb. 22 meeting.

After the joint meeting adjourned, the Planning Board heard the amendments the Town Board suggested for the Temporary Real Estate Development Sign Ordinance, members decided to take a hard look at the Stormwater Ordinance at its Feb. 22 meeting.

At Commissioner John Dotson's suggestion at a previous Town Board meeting, a maximum of 25% of any sign face can be allotted to the Real Estate firm's name or agent – even multi-faced signs. 

Individual Real Estate signs can't be used in conjunction with temporary development signs.

... ORDINANCES continued from page 1

* A sign permit will be issued upon proof of a building permit from the Macon County Building Department for the development, or a final plat approval by the Town of Highlands.

* The term of a Temporary Sign permit is three years.

* A permit can be renewed for one two-year period by the Zoning Administrator and renewal is contingent upon the sign continuing to meet all requirements of the ordinance, continuing active development and marketing efforts, continued maintenance of the development and the continuance of an active building permit issued by the Macon County Building department.

* Signs must be removed from single family or multi-family residential subdivisions within 30 days after the sale of 90% of the units or upon expiration of the permit or permit renewal, whichever occurs first.

Developers and Real Estate companies must adhere to the ordinance upon its adoption – no grandfathering will be allowed.

Danny Crane, formerly of Highlands and son of Eloise and the late Carlton Crane, was married to Maiza Gatti Carabin on December 21, 2009 in a civil ceremony. The wedding took place in Curitiba, Brazil where the couple will reside. Maiza's parents are Arlette and the late Celio Carabin. They met while Maiza was an exchange student in Highlands in 1972.
Ongoing and Upcoming Events

Type O Neg and B Neg Blood Needed

Macon County - As a result of the recent bad weather across the country, on the heels of the holiday season, the blood supply has drastically decreased in the Carolinas Region. Type O negative and type B negative blood supplies have dropped to emergency levels and help is needed now! Since type O negative blood can be used for any patient when there is not time to determine the patient’s blood type, it is crucial that there is a sufficient supply.

Tuesday, February 2
Lowes of Franklin Blood Drive
(Georgia Highway)
9:30 am to 2 pm
Please call 349-4654 for more information or to schedule an appointment.
Walk-ins Welcome, Appointments preferred. All presenting donors have a chance to win a $100 gift card!

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 highlandseditor@aol.com

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Mondays at 5 p.m.

Ruby Cinema
Hwy 441, Franklin, NC
524-2076

Jan. 29-Feb. 3
EDGE OF DARKNESS
rated R
Friday: 4:20, 7, 9:20
Saturday: 4:20, 7, 9:20
Sunday: 2, 4:20, 7
Mon + Wed: 4:20, 7
Tues + Thurs: 2, 4:20, 7

TOOTH FAIRY
rated PG
Friday: 4:15, 7, 9:15
Saturday: 2:05, 4:15, 7, 9:15
Sunday: 2:05, 4:15, 7, 9:15
Mon + Wed: 4:15, 7, 9:15
Tues + Thurs: 2:05, 4:15, 7, 9:15

AVATAR
rated PG-13
Final Week
Friday: 4:30, 7, 9:30
Saturday: 1:30, 4:30, 7, 9:30
Sunday: 1:30, 4:30, 7, 9:30
Mon + Wed: 4:30, 7, 9:30
Tues + Thurs: 1:30, 4:30, 7, 9:30

UP IN THE AIR
rated R
Friday: 4:30
Saturday: 2:10, 4:30
Sunday: 2:10, 4:30
Mon + Wed: 4:30
Tues + Thurs: 2:10, 4:30

BOOK OF ELI
rated R
Friday: 7, 9, 9:30
Saturday: 7, 9, 9:30
Sunday: 7
Mon + Wed: 7, 9
Tues + Thurs: 7
The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 5.7 mile hike on the Park Creek and Park Ridge trails in the Standing Indian area. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin, opposite Burger King at 9:30 a.m. Drive 26 miles round trip. Call leaders Bill and Sharon Van Horn, 369-1983, for reservations.

It's a Friends of Panthertown workday. Volunteers should meet at 9:30 am at the Salt Rock trailhead. We'll be doing trail maintenance (location TBA). Anyone interested in volunteering is welcome to attend—no previous experience is necessary. Tools will be provided. Participants should be in good physical condition, able to hike 6 miles and lift 20+ lbs. Volunteers should bring a day pack with lunch, water, warm clothes, rain gear and work gloves if you have them.

In the event of inclement weather, the work day will be cancelled. For details on upcoming work days, go to www Friends of Panthertown.org or call Nina Elliott, the Friends of Panthertown Coordinator at 828-526-8938 (ext 258) or friends.of.panthertown@gmail.com.

Sunday, Jan. 31

First Presbyterian Church will host an old fashioned Hymn Sing at 4 p.m. on Sunday. Those attending may choose a hymn they wish to sing from the 1938 Cokesbury Hymnal. Song leader will be Stell Huie, and Angie Jenkins will play the piano. Please make plans to attend for an enjoyable hour of singing and Christian fellowship. The church is located at 471 Main Street. Handicap entrances are located on 5th Street and on Church Street.

The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 1.2 mile hike along a new short trail near the Environmental Center in Franklin. Meet at Frog Headquarters on Main St. in Franklin at 2:00 p.m. Drive 6 miles round trip. Call leader Kay Conrell, 369-6820, for reservations. Visitors and children over ten are welcome, but no pets please.

Tuesday, Feb. 2

At HiArt, The Geography of Bliss by Eric Weiner. Coordinator: John Carr. Civic Center: 10-11:30 a.m.

Lowe's of Franklin Blood Drive (Georgia Highway), 9:30 a.m to 2 p.m. Please call 494-3654 for more information or to schedule an appointment. Walk-ins Welcome. Appointments preferred. All presenting donors have a chance to win a $100 gift card!

Wednesday, Feb. 3

The Macon County Public Health Center. The course will be First Aid Basics course will be conducted by the Macon County Public Health Center. The course will be held on Thursday, February 25, from 8:30 a.m. until

Friday, Feb. 5

At the Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts in Franklin. 441, the Booth Brothers. Tickets are $14 per person. Call 828-524-1598 or 866-273-4615 or go to greatmountainmusic.com.

Saturday, Feb. 6

The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate-to-strenuous 4.5 mile hike with an elevation change of 1000 feet from the Standing Indian campground to Blackwell Gap Trail. Meet at the Nantahala Club House on Carl Slagle road in Franklin at 9:00 a.m. Drive 20 miles round trip with shuttle. Call Chris Shaw, 371-0183; for reservations. Visitors are welcome but no pets please.

Sunday, Feb. 7

The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 2-mile hike to Mud Creek Falls off Hwy. 246/106 near Sky Valley. Meet at Smoky Mtn. Visitors Center in Otto at 2:00 p.m. or call leader for alternate meeting place. Drive 22 miles round trip. Call leader Kay Conrell, 369-6820, for reservations. Visitors are welcome but no pets please.

Tuesday, Feb. 9

At HiArt, "Batter My Heart" will be distributed at previous meeting. Coordinator: Martha Porter Civic Center: 10-11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 10

H1N1 shots will be given at the county health departments' office in Highlands off Buck Creek Road on Wednesday. The clinics are by appointment only and are offered free of charge. Appointments may be scheduled by calling 349-2081.

Saturday, Feb. 13

The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate-to-strenuous 5-mile hike with an elevation change of 700 feet to Windy Falls, a seldom visited awesome falls on the Horsepasture River. Call leader Mike Ketters, 743-1079, for reservations.

Sunday, Feb. 21

The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 1-mile hike on the Taylor Lake Loop Trail in Black Rock Mtn. State Park in GA near Clayton. Meet at the Smoky Mtn. Visitors Center in Otto at 2:00 p.m. Drive 26 miles round trip with shuttle. Call leader Kay Conrell, 369-6820, for reservations. Visitors and children over ten are welcome but no pets please.

Tuesday, Feb. 23

At HiArt, "The Things People Say" by Elizabeth Kolbert and "The Paranoid Style in American Politics" by Richard Hofstadter. Coordinator: Peter Ray. Civic Center: 10-11:30 a.m.

Thursday, Feb. 25

An American Red Cross Adult CPR/AED and First Aid Basics course will be conducted by the Macon County Public Health Center. The course will be held on Thursday, February 25, from 8:30 a.m. until

More H1N1 Flu Shot Clinics Scheduled

The Macon County Public Health Center has scheduled a series of H1N1 flu vaccination clinics in Franklin and Highlands for anyone ages 6 months and older.

The Franklin clinics are scheduled at the health department’s 1830 Lakeside Drive location on the Friday afternoons of


The Highlands clinic will be held at the health department’s clinic off Buck Creek Road on Wednesday, February 10th. The clinics are by appointment only and are offered free of charge. Appointments may be scheduled by calling 349-2081.

County Commission declares February ‘Healthy Heart Month’

MC Public Health outlines events

Macon County Public Health Center and Angel Medical Center are partnering to focus on heart health during the month of February (national Heart Health Awareness month). Our kickoff event for the month will be WEAR RED DAY, which is Friday, February 5th. The event will start at 10:30 am in the cafeteria at Angel Medical Center. Some of the speakers will include Jim Bruckner, Macon County Health Director and Dr. Michael Kegan, Cardiologist with AMC. The East Franklin Elementary School’s Jump Rope for Heart teams will also be there and perform.

A 1-mile Heart Health Walk around downtown Franklin is also planned for Saturday, February 13th. Registration will start at 10:30 am and the walk will start at 11:00 am. The walk will start and end at Tartan Hall. After the walk, lunch will be served and Dr. Kit Holm (Medical Director for AMC’s Cardiac Rehabilitation) will provide a brief presentation. Franklin High School Cheerleaders and the EHS Jump Rope for Heart teams will also be there. More details to come about the walk.

We hope to see you at both events. If you have any questions, just let me or Bonnie Peggs with AMC (349-6839) know.
**Ongoing and Upcoming Events**

4:30 pm at the Macon County Public Health Center at 1830 Lakeside Drive. Participants must pre-register and pre-pay at the Macon County Public Health Center before Monday, Feb. 22. For more information on class fees, please call Jennifer at 349-2439.

**Thurs-Sun, Feb. 25-28 & March 5-7**
- Highlands-Cashiers Players to perform The Dixie Swim Club at PAC, 8 p.m. and 2 p.m. on Sundays. Season subscriptions are on sale now at the price of $50 for the three plays, a savings of $10 over the price of individual tickets. Among other perks, subscribers get to make early reservations for preferred seating. Mail or send a check directly to the Players’ Post Office Box, 1416, Highlands NC, 28741.
- Sat.-Sun., Feb. 27-28 or Tues.-Wed., March 2-3
  - Australian photographer Greg Newington will teach a one-and-a-half day field/studio workshop, “Winter Light – Using Light, Composition and Texture in Photography,” at The Bascom. Cost is $150 for Bascom members and $175 for non-members. Registration is going on now. To register, call (828) 526-4949 ext. 100 or visit www.thebascom.org.
- Sunday, Feb. 28
  - The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a strenuous 7.5-mile hike to London Bald from Appletree campground with an elevation change of 2000 feet. Meet at the Nantahala Club House on Carl Slagle road in Franklin at 8:30 a.m. Drive 45 miles round trip. Call Chris Shaw, 371-0183, for reservations.

**Sunday, March 7**
- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 1.2-mile hike from Rock Gap to Wallace Gap in the Standing Indian area. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin, opposite Burger King, 2:00 p.m. Drive 22 miles round trip. Call leader Kay Coriell, 369-6820.
- Monday, March 8
  - An acclaimed author, storyteller, humorist, and musician, Keillor will take center stage in WCU’s Fine and Performing Arts Center at 7 p.m. Reserved seat tickets for “An Evening with Garrison Keillor” are $25. For information or tickets, contact the FAPAC box office at (828) 227-2479 or online www.wcu.edu/fapac.
  - Tuesday, Mar 9
    - At Exit, The Evil Gene by Dr. Barbara Oakley. Coordinator: Virginia Wilson. Civic Center. 10-11:30 a.m.

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**The Booth Brothers to perform at Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts**

With their harmony-drenched vocals and warm, easy voices, the Booth Brothers have been sharing their faith and their music fulltime since 1998. These men get their musical influences from a wide range of performers from the Eagles to the Gatlin Brothers to legendary gospel greats such as Bill Gaither and Mosie Lister. But their inspiration comes straight from God.

The Booth Brothers are coming to Franklin, NC. This trio, known for their harmony-drenched vocals and warm, easy voices, are coming for an exciting musical event on Monday, February 5, 2010 at the Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts.

Award winning singers Ronnie Booth, Michael Booth, and Jim Brady make up the trio. Their unique ability to communicate through song and humor have garnered them many fans with their appearances on the Bill Gaither Homecoming tours and their own heavy touring schedule over the last several years. They have received many awards for their vocal, musical and songwriting accomplishments. In 2009, they took home over 19 awards, including Tenor vocalist of the year, Lead vocalist of the year, Baritone vocalist of the year, Trio of the year, Song of the year and many others.

This concert will begin at 7:30 pm. To acquire tickets or additional information regarding this exciting musical event, call (828) 524-1598, (866) 273-4615. Make plans now to join the Booth Brothers at the Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts on Monday, February 5, 2010 for a high energy, awesome event filled with a life changing message.

**Girls sweep, boys split against SMC rivals**

By Ryan Potts

The Highlands High School varsity girls took two games this week from rivals Swain County and Rosman.

On Friday, the Lady Highlanders faced the Lady Tigers in Rosman with bad intentions after dropping a heartbreaking loss at Hiawassee Dam. They took little time for the Lady Highlanders to take a lead, but the 23-0 run in the third quarter broke the game open for good as the visitors quieted the Rosman crowd and Lady Tigers star Joanna Whitmire in a 58-25 destruction.

Emily Munger matched the Lady Tigers team total with 25 points, and Taylor Buras and Courtney Rogers also scored in double figures with 11 and 10 respectively.

On Tuesday, the Highlander boys were looking for their 7th victory on the season at Rosman, perhaps looking ahead to Friday’s rematch with Hiawassee Dam. The game was close throughout with Highlands holding the Lady Devils at arm’s length to hold on for a 44-38 victory. Emily Munger scored 12 in the victory.

The Highlander boys were looking for their 7th victory on the season at Rosman on Friday night, having beaten the Tigers at home earlier in the year.

Highlands opened the game strong on a 10-2 run, but allowed the Tigers to get back in the game early and ultimately take a 3-point half time lead. The Highlanders returned fire in the second half, taking a 6-point lead at one point, but turnovers and slow free throw shooting plagued Highlands down the stretch and they dropped a close one 62-57. Robbie Vanderbilt scored 20 in the defeat, Samuel Wheeler and Josh Delacruz both added 16.

The Highlanders finally got their 7th win of the season Tuesday, defeating the Swain County Maroon Devils 59-47. The Highlanders trailed 9-2 early, but settled in and played well enough to gain a 3-point half time lead. In the second half, the Highlanders broke the game open methodically, playing stifling defense and holding Swain to just 19 second half points. Logan Schmitt, Michael Shearl, Robbie VanderBlit and Josh Delacruz all scored in double figures for the locals, and Samuel Wheeler held Swain star Ryan McMan to only 2 points in the second half.

The Highlanders will host Hiawassee Dam Friday night in what will be the most important game of the season thus far for both squads. Both Highlander teams need tremendous fan support Friday night, so come out and cheer on your Highlanders.

**Ongoing and Upcoming Events**

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Sing praises

HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH – ELCA
Chaplain Margaret Howell

We all know what has happened in the tiny island nation of Haiti this week. A 7.0 Scale earthquake shook the country like a terrier shakes a rat. It is amazing how many people still think that God was responsible for the suffering in Haiti. A certain televangelist whose name rhymes with “gut” has made it very clear that he considers the disaster in Haiti as punishment for sinfulness. Frankly, I wouldn’t want to know a god like that. Fortunately, most everybody knows that God isn’t like that.

The local woman clergy, unofficially known as Women for Peace, had a novel idea at our meeting this week: Immediately pull all troops out of Afghanistan and Iraq and anywhere else there is trouble that we’re involved in. Announce to the entire world that we no longer going to fight wars, we are going to put all our military resources into acts of mercy and peace in places where disasters have struck. May I live to see it happen.

Two former presidents, Pres. George W. Bush and Pres. Bill Clinton, met with President Obama and have agreed to help raise and oversee funds that will be used to help Haiti now and to help rebuild after the immediate crisis is over. People all over the world are sending money to aid organizations who are experiencing these types of emergencies.

As much as we would like to go to Haiti personally to help, there isn’t enough food and water for the people already there. Our gifts will be our money and our prayers.

But, perhaps the greatest gift is from the Haitian people themselves.

“How can that be?” You might ask. “They have lost everything!”

They might have nothing, but some of them have everything!

Let me explain. I’ve been following the events since the earthquake, as we all have.

Last night I saw video of orphans and people, totally destitute, with only the clothes on their backs singing. Singing to the glory of creation, singing the praise of a God who is good and loving and holy. One woman, in particular, moved me to tears. She had her hands in the air, her eyes closed, singing and praising God amid total ruin and chaos.

Could we do that? Could we raise our arms to heaven and praise God after everything and everyone we love has been wrenched away?

The answer is we probably couldn’t and neither could she, on her own.

But we have the gift of the Spirit about which St. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12.
The same Spirit that helps us to discover and grow our gifts also brings Christ to dwell in our hearts and our minds. Gifts alone wouldn’t be enough.

It is the love which we are given and the love we give away that is holy.

The greater the love, the greater the gift.

Any gift we might give to her pales in comparison to the love which we are given and the love we give away that is holy.

The greater the love, the greater the gift.
Above, at Monday night’s commission meeting, Finance Director Evelyn Southard and her staff were acknowledged for receiving the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Assoc. of the US and Canada. The department has received it numerous times over the years. Left, Jane Morgan received an award for working for Macon County for 25 years. Not pictured are Gary Ammons, Jeff James and Terry Watson.

Above, Darlene Asher, Brian Burnette, Gary Davis, David Gray, Sonya Gunnin, Tim Hollands, Linda Moody, Lucretia Sharp, Bobbie Soleau and Glenn Spradlin were honored for 10 years of service.

Above, serving 30 years are Fannie Buchanan, Shelley Ledford, David O’Dell and Mike Talent. Chairman Ronnie Beale is with recipients.

Above, at Monday night’s commission meeting, Remy Adrian (6th grade), above, and Jessie Palmer (8th grade) won the Young Author’s Award for Highlands School. Adrian’s piece was entitled “Stranded on an Island” and Palmer’s piece was entitled “Sands of Time.” Fourteen students in grades 2-8 won the “Young Authors” statewide competition.

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Acknowledged for serving 15 years are Margaret Bishop, Brian Henry, Robbie Holland, Art Provencher, Pat Revis and Lynn Wright.

Acknowledged for serving 20 years were Larry Conley, Alan Durden, Tommy Keener, Lynn Nicholson and Wesley Price.

Also acknowledged but not present was Lewis W. Seay, Jr., who was awarded a plaque for serving the county 35 years.

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the firework demonstration, none of them thought the town should enter into a long-term contract, nor share equally in the distribution of donations.

"I don't want to accept a proposal of this nature at this time until we know how many contributions come in from businesses," said Commissioner Dennis DeWolf.

Commissioner Larry Rogers concurred. "Entering into a 50/50 arrangement is inappropriate until we see who comes in to help and then we'll go from there."

Commissioner John Dotson said he was sure there would be a number of businesses willing to help and a little bit from many would go a long way. He also suggested budgeting and voting on the arrangement annually rather than long-term. "I'd rather do that than assume this is a rubber stamp each year."

Because the Chamber must lock down its agreement with East Coast Pyrotechnics before it gets booked up, Mayor David Wilkes suggested a compromise which the board accepted.

Wilkes said at this year's cost of $5,000, it would actually cost the Chamber less than in years past.

"You'll actually be $500 ahead since you've been paying $5,500 a year for three years, so I propose that the first $5,000 raised go to the town to offset its expense and any money that comes in after we recoup our $5,000 goes to the Chamber."

The Chamber has been instructed to ask the business community — the group that actually benefits from the influx of people who come to town for the activities — to make donations to the cause rather than asking taxpayers and citizens who don't directly benefit from the tourist trade to shoulder the cost. Not including chamber dues, the Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center received $225,000 to $275,000 annually in Room Tax money which is supposed to be used on the promotion of tourism in Highlands.

Concerning the Highlands Police Department, Commissioner Gary Drake asked that expenses be outlined delineating what it's costing the town in gas and upkeep to allow police officers to have a vehicle and drive it to and from work.

"I'm not saying there is anything wrong, but I campaigned on fiscal responsibility and I think the taxpayers need to know how their money is being spent," he said.

When he learned that the 56 alarms the police department responded to from Dec. 21, Jan. 14 were false, he asked if the police department was charging for the inconvenience and being paid for its efforts. Chief Bill Harrel said after the second false alarm, homeowners are charged $25 per call and that the department was being paid. The fire department charges $250.

This past week, Highlands' Newspaper received phone calls and emails about the Police Department suggesting Mayor Wilkes is in line for the Police Department reduced to seven officers, fire Chief Harrel, and get rid of the Highlands School Resource Officer.

However, Mayor Wilkes says it's not true. "No initiative is underway to remove the chief or any other officers nor the Highlands School Resource Officer," he said in an email. "Budget discussions begin at the next Town Board meeting and the police department budget will undergo the same review as all other departments. I am not aware of any discussion or determination from anyone as to how many officers Highlands should have."

Commissioner Larry Rogers concurred. "I have attended every Town Board meeting and I am not aware of any talk about firing or replacing of police officers or the chief. There was discussion from the board requesting that Town Manager Jim Fati and to gather information pertaining to the cost for the patrol cars that are taken home for budget purposes," said Rogers. "I don't know how these "rumors" originated and on what basis? In my point of view, people should concentrate more on things that are "fact" and less on things that are "rumor."

In other Town Board news, commissioners OK'd the appointment of Commissioner Gary Drake and Old Edwards Hospital Group's Marketing Director Amanda Sullivan to the Highlands TDC board which oversees the use of the Room Tax money. Drake is replacing Commissioner Hank Ross as the town representative and Sullivan is replacing Drake as the at-large representative. At its meeting Monday night, the Macon County Commission also OK'd the appointments. Also appointed to committees were Kim Lewicki and Harry Beaster to the New Business Group Committee and Steve Abaray to the Sustainability Committee.

Mayor Wilkes welcomed other citizens to join the Business Group Committee which will act as a liaison to the Town Board concerning varied matters in the business community.

The Town Board will hold a budget work session Wednesday, Feb. 3 at 4 p.m. before the regularly scheduled Town Board meeting at 7 p.m. in the community building.

- Kim Lewicki

... HIS & HERS from 6

... FISCAL continued from page 1

FISCAL continued from page 1

Business News

Highlands Rotary sponsors Children’s Dental Health

This past Friday was the first swishing day at the Highlands School for grades K-5. Swishing with fluoride rinse is part of the Children’s Dental Health Project sponsored by Highlands and Mountain Top Rotary Clubs.

The children in Christine Murphy’s third grade class had a ball — giggles, laughs and healthy teeth.

Principal Brian Jetter with Health Project Rotarians Jim Rothermel and Mike Hunter were present at many of the swishing classes and encouraged those students not enrolled to talk to their parents about the free Dental Health program.

Local photographer honored

Ginger Moseley, of A Moment in Time Photography in Scaly Mountain, received two awards — one for artistic merit and one for customer service. November saw one of her images take 4th place in the Professional Photographer’s Cover Contest and January came with the announcement of her studio’s earning a 2010 Brides Choice Award.

A surprise Valentine’ for troops

Christ Church of the Valley would like to invite you to be apart of a special Valentine Surprise for the brave men and woman, from Highlands and Cashiers, who are deployed in Afghanistan or Iraq.

In appreciation for their service to our country we will be sending a box filled with reminders of home. (Sweets, a local paper, music, books, notes and cards.)

If you would like to participate please send the name and address of someone who has been deployed along with your personal words of encouragement for them to: Christ Church of the Valley, PO Box 2863, Cashiers NC 28717, on or before February 1, 2010. For more information, call 742-5470.

TB Agenda

Town Board Meeting — Wed., Feb. 3, 7 p.m.

• Continued Public Hearing: Temporary Development Signs
• Public Hearing: Highlands Methodist Church Rezoning
• Public Hearing: Gilchrist & Tate Rezoning 2271 Dillard Road
• Resolution Awarding Contract for Pine Street Improvements
• Consider Appointments to Sustainability Committee
• Consider Appointments to Business Group
• Closed Session to discuss Personnel Matter
Sheriff Dept. charges Macon County man with child abuse

Joshua Nathaniel Grant was charged with one count of Intentional Child Abuse—Serious Physical Injury, a Class E Felony, on January 22, 2010 by the Macon County Sheriff’s Office. Bond was set at $25,000 and Grant’s first court date is February 11, 2010.

Grant is 22-years-old and a resident of Topton in Macon County. Investigators consulted with the District Attorney’s Office throughout the investigation and were assisted by the Cherokee County Sheriff’s Office. This is an ongoing investigation and no further information is available at this time.

“No matter what the situation is, there is absolutely no acceptable excuse as to why a parent or anyone else would shake an infant. Many of the symptoms are unable to be seen at the time of the actual assault. An infant is the most vulnerable of victims and these cases are very difficult to work because the child can not speak and tell who hurt them,” said Sheriff Robert Holland. “Since first reported, investigators have worked non-stop on this case and have done an outstanding job. I am confident my detectives will continue to be thorough in conducting their investigation. An investigation does not end with an arrest therefore at this time I will make no additional statements so that we do not hinder the investigation.”

... HAITI continued from page 3

I am offering you an opportunity to unite with members of the First Presbyterian Church of Highlands to help with relief for Haiti. Our common problem is that at this stage they don’t need us in Haiti, therefore the best thing we can do is to give financial support to an agency that will provide relief where it is most needed. But, what agency will deliver “the most bang for our buck?”

Rev. Don Mullen has helped me begin researching several alternatives, they include: Catholic Relief, Church of the Incarnation – Highlands, Harvest Time International, Medical Benevolence Foundation, Partners in Health, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, World Vision.

Your donation to Haitian Relief will go to the best agencies that will provide the most relief in the shortest period of time to the Haitian people.

— Hillrie Quin - First Presbyterian Mission Committee Chair
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Highlands
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Highlands School students go all out for 2009 Homecoming Dance (Rescheduled due to inclement weather to Sat. Jan. 23, 2010)

Photos by Jim Lewicki
SPECIAL Weekly Events Posted Here & Noted on the Map

Legend Box

NOTE: There is a $10 min. editing fee for changing map ads. Deadline Mon. 5pm for next edition