Group to push for safe slopes in county
Will urge MC Commission to pass sensible slope ordinance

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Contact: Julie.hitrust@earthlink.net.

Reading program a winner

By Luke Osteen

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Participants in the four-week Lindamood-Bell Learning Program held at East Franklin Elementary School – both teachers and students — took turns telling the board how they’d benefited. Fifty-four students and 18 teachers from throughout the Macon County system took part in the program.

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Boys win first game of season

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Photo by Lisa Osteen

County stands up to State

On the heels of sending a resolution to the North Carolina Utilities Commission objecting to Duke’s intention to raise rates by 17% comes the news of a political foot in the town’s Land Use Plan while doing so.

Thomas Craig, Patrick Leonard, John Underwood and ETJ representatives John Crowe and Mike Bryson voted to abolish ETJ. Linda Clark and Alan Marsh voted to keep it. For Clark and Marsh it’s about protecting property rights, not taking them. But proponents of abolishing ETJ are concerned.

ETJ is on the line

Monday night’s Planning Board meeting resurrected the ill feelings, mistrust, even hatred citizens in the ETJ harbor against the town, government in general, and the country clubs since November 6, 2005 when ETJ was adopted.

After a 1½ hour meeting where 30 citizens turned out to speak against ETJ, the board voted 5-2 to recommend whether to keep or abolish it.

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Dear Editor,

I do enjoy Fred’s columns and sense of humor — maybe it is because we are both senior citizens! While I agree with much in your column “The slime inside the beltway” in the Aug. 10 edition of Highlands’ Newspaper, you could have pursued one point further and maybe, just maybe, hit home in the heart of some readers who are guilty.

Yes, I believe that many elected officials become tainted and rich from the system — but I have known others who never benefited from the job but gave up.

However, my main concern is with the MAJORITY who refuse to become informed, or God forbid express an opinion just in case it offends someone within earshot. (I know that does not apply to you or to me.) For years (and I lived in Broward County, FL for almost 40 yrs.) I have spoken out to our officials about the benefits paid to our employees in the public sector — yes, yes I know your history! But it got out of hand and we could not afford it nor could the future residents. I remember a small town in Dade County going bankrupt because of its retiring work force.

I hammered acquaintances about the lack of qualifications about candidates — most importantly the current President! Do they want to hear it? No! “Hush” they say, “don’t talk politics or religion.” Since when are they in the same category? The lack of knowledge astounds and saddens me.

I believe your newspaper leans way to the left, but because you and Don Swanson still write columns, I will continue to read it thoroughly and patronize those who advertise.

But since you are so well read by the public, touch on the subject of “taking a stand,” getting their news from other than the liberal media, and form an opinion!

I fear for the cowardice of these “nice” Americans as they may take us all to hell in a handbasket!

Thanks for listening and God Bless — we may not be able to put that in print soon!

Jeri Spinella
Sapphire, NC
Jensen Beach, FL

Dear Editor,

I must say that I enjoyed Dr. Salzarulo’s two columns — Aug. 7 and Aug. 10 issues — where he provides insight into his youth and how it has affected how he deals with his son. It is so much more heartwarming to hear him speak as a father rather than a critic.

I was too angry to write when he wrote the column on “snuff” films — I had no prior knowledge of the beast — but I soon came to realize it would not be to my liking.

However, in trying to be informative, did he find it necessary to offend by saying that there would be no shortage of applicants for the role from the Tea Party Group? He does not know me, but I have attended several rallies where people have cried out against some government policies. But because I chose to be active — not offensive — only carrying an American Flag, he lumped me in a category of which he knows nothing. I have been surprised that he offered no apology for that smear and frankly, I was shocked at him lowering himself to that level. I may not always agree with him but I thought he was more honorable. I’ll bet Bull would not have approved!

Jeri Spinella
Sapphire
Jensen Beach, FL

Dear Editor,

While I have not gotten to Highlands much this summer, I was there and read Fred Wooldridge’s column in the Aug. 10 issue. It hit the nail right on the head. People in this great country of ours had better wake up, or we will lose it. I wish I knew how to send his article to every newspaper or magazine.

Jeri Spinella
Sapphire
Jensen Beach, FL

Americans need to grow a spine

Salzarulo offends Tea Partiers

Wake up, America!
Thank you to all the firefighters who came to our aid on August 8, a heartfelt "thank you." These words seem so underwhelming in trying to describe the feelings of gratitude and admiration we gained for our highly trained Highlands Fire and Rescue team, as well as for the Cashiers/Glenville, Scaly and Cullasaja Gorge fire fighters. You came on the scene with a determination, not only to put out the fire, but to keep it from devastating our lives.

We recognize that many of you are highly trained volunteers, giving of your time and energy to serve and protect our community. We thank you for your competency and professionalism, not only in fighting the fire, but also in tending to us with an incredible sensitivity, as if our home was your very own. We are humbled by your unselfishness.

In Highlands, we can boast of many things—from lush, green, forested mountains to starry, starry skies; yet these natural wonders pale in comparison to the quality, integrity and fine character of our own people, especially you, our fire fighters. We honor you for being selfless, skilled and committed to making our community stronger and resilient.

May God bless and watch over each and every one of you.

In sincerest gratitude,
Rick and Margaret Eichman
Laughing at Life •

What’s in your pie?

Fred Wooldridge

Feedback is encouraged!
askfredanything@aol.com

What’s in your pie?

To start, here’s a few famous Mississippi sayings from the past you might enjoy reading…maybe not…especially if you’re from Mississippi.

One of my favorites is, “I’d rather have a sister working in a whorehouse than have her live in Mississippi for even one day.” And here’s another. “Never marry the girl whose name appears on the water tower unless, as is usually the case, all the girls’ names in town appear on the water tower.” How about, “First Prize: One week vacation to Mississippi. Second Prize: Two week vacation to Mississippi. Third Prize: Well, you get the picture.

Ha, obviously this is my week to pick on folks from the great state of Mississippi, a land full of weird people with close together, beady eyes and large foreheads. And the reason I’m pickin’ on Mississippi this week is because I just saw the movie “The Help” and I am furious…appalled…devastated…shocked by what I saw. How could those maids and housekeepers have treated their masters…their employers…in such a cruel way? Have they no respect for white folk? Ha, how about NO.

And what Mississippi couple would wake up one morning pregnant and want to name their baby “Skeeter?” What? In the cultured state of Kentucky where I came from, a skeeter is a blood sucking insect to be swatted on warm summer nights. Skeeter? Get real. In Mississippi, a skeeter is a girl who writes about the plight of the hired help and eventually has to move to New York to keep from getting lynched…or swatted. I guess it could’ve been worse. They could have named her “Cockroach.”

• See WOOLDRIDGE page 6
A league of their own

One of the first Haitians I ever cared for was a young man who had walked 12 hours to reach our small hospital in Cange. He was suffering from a testicular torsion, a condition in which the testicle twists within the scrotal sack, interrupting its blood supply, producing severe pain and if untreated, death of the testicle. I can't imagine walking 12 minutes with a testicular torsion, but I'm not Haitian.

The only surgeon in our group was a gynecologist who was at first unwilling to operate. He suggested punt the patient to Port Au Prince, where he would have remained untreated. I'd seen the operation often enough so I persuaded Hank I could talk him through it. The testicle survived, though I have no way of knowing if it was still capable of producing sperm.

The story is not about our effort; it is about Joseph, a young man, a boy really, who trudged 12 hours, accompanied only by his older brother with a condition that would have left any of us writhing in our beds. I failed to learn a lesson about Haitians from the experience.

After the earthquake, surviving Haitians, most homeless, all hungry, and many injured, responded to the crisis with great dignity, patience, and virtually no violence. I saw a crowd of hungry peasants pressing close to truck unloading 50-pound bags of rice, hands outstretched for a bit of food. Guards easily drove them back using tree limbs for whips. Of course, there were tears and wailing when a family member died, as many did. But even in loss, the Haitians managed to repress the rage they must have felt. I failed to learn a lesson about Haitians even from that experience.

Last week we returned to Haiti determined not to forget, as most of the world has done.

At the time of the quake, relief workers expressed a common concern, one I found myself parroting: “Haiti is a hard place to live, even with two legs. It will prove impossible to live after an amputation. We must provide prosthetic limbs.” Even as we said it, we were well aware of the world’s short memory span, and the difficulty of supplying, fitting, and maintaining the artificial legs. We still hadn’t learned much about Haitians.

Our trip was somewhat disappointing. We weren’t able to do as much surgery as we would have liked. There are always impediments to progress in Haiti. Inadequate maintenance and frequent power interruptions take a toll on equipment. There were days when we were forced to delay surgery until the hospital had water. We did what we could; removed a few rotting limbs, surgically corrected fractures so bones would heal straight, even removed a painful lumbar disk in a patient suffering severe pain. But as I guy who always wants more, I found it too little.

My heart was heavy as we rode back to the Port Au Prince airport. Then we witnessed a scene which, once and for all, taught me the lesson that for so many years I had failed to learn.

On a dusty field two teams were playing soccer. All the players were amputees.

Haitian amputees play soccer on a typical Saturday in Haiti.
Anyway, being born and raised in the cultured state of Kentucky during the '40s and '50s, "The Help" hit home with me and brought back many memories. My parents were in the restaurant business with lots of kitchen help and my Pa always said, "Be nice to the people who are fixin' your food." What a mouthful (ha) that statement was.

Even to this day, some rich people mistreat their kitchen help. What are they thinking? Well, they should be thinking the unthinkable. If you're reading this, have seven figures in your bank account and hire people, regardless of color, to cook and clean for you, get your fancy to the movies and see "The Help." And don't ya just know that every single person of means who has his food prepared for them will worry from that day forward. Fun, fun, fun! Even worse, how about the kitchen help reading this and a light just went off in their heads. Hmm, Hmm, Hmm!

And once again, years of police work have given me a view of the more seedy side of life. I've known lots of kitchen help in my day. I've known lots of kitchen help with criminal records in my day and I've known lots of kitchen help who hated cops who worked in restaurants where cops frequented. Are you getting the picture?

I once interviewed a criminal in the Dade County jail and during the course of our discussion he told me that in the 18 years he worked as a short-order cook, a meal for a cop never left the kitchen without his spit in it. He was sooooo proud of his achievement as he grinned at me, displaying three beautiful gold plated front teeth and said, "All the kitchen help like to spit on cops' food. Ain't it tasty?"

Years ago, the l'il missus and I were on a cruise and, as usual, were given seat assignments for dinner. There was this one couple I called "Mr. & Mrs. Complainer." He was worse than her.

Nothing was ever right and he sent back every plate that reached his table, sometimes twice. On about the tenth day at sea, I leaned over and whispered, "They're spitting on your entree. In fact, if you're lucky, that's all they're doing to your entree. They hate your guts and they know they'll never see you again." He was stunned and never complained about a thing for the rest of the cruise.

So remember, folks, be kind to those who prepare your food, especially when they serve you that delicious and awesome looking piece of chocolate pie. Yum, yum!

Fred's new mystery/thriller titled Deceived is available at Shakespeare's in Highlands, Chapter Two in Cashiers and Prater's in Clayton....or e-book at all major outlets.

...SAZARULO from pg 5

Using their crutches, they vaulted down the field, kicking the ball as they went. They moved swiftly, gracefully on aluminum crutches and without fancy prostheses. We laughed when a player corralled the ball with his crutch, wondering if the maneuver was legal, if the crutch was considered a leg or an extension of the arm.

They were doing what they had done before disaster struck; having fun, playing soccer on Saturday morning. They were doing what Haitians have always done; making do, making the best of what they had, surviving despite a torment of imposed by man and nature. These Haitians, these amputees, had a league of their own, but more importantly, were in a league of their own.
• COACH’S CORNER •

Drury was one of a kind

It was the kind of news that was a small blip on the radar in the sports world. In addition to all the news about the NBA lockout, Terrelle Pryor signing with Oakland, baseball pennant races and the like, the news that Chris Drury has decided to hang it up wasn’t exactly groundbreaking. While Drury is certainly a name that is well known among hockey fans, he has concluded a remarkable career of clutch play that began when he was just a youngster in little league.

Drury first made a name for himself while playing for the Trumbull, Connecticut little league team that was the champion of the Little League World Series in 1989. Drury was the hero for the Connecticut team by pitching a complete game in the final against Taipei and also driving in two runs. He was honored for this by being asked to throw out the first pitch in the 1989 World Series. I distinctly remember this, and you might as well because that World Series is the one where the earthquake hit Southern California and caused tremendous damage. (I also remember Dave Stewart dominating that series on the mound and wishing I could stare a hole in the batters head like he could)

After his LLWS success, Drury went on to play hockey in college for Boston University, where he not only won a national championship, but also won the Hobey Baker Award, which is the hockey equivalent to the Heisman Trophy. Drury also scored over 100 goals in each of his final two seasons as a BU Terrier. Drury then went on to the NHL to play for the Colorado Avalanche, and was named the Rookie of the Year in his first season in Denver. (1998-99)

The Avalanche won the Stanley Cup in 2001, primarily due to Drury and his flair for the dramatic. Much in the same way that he did as a youngster, Drury stepped up in clutch situations, scoring 12 points in the playoffs that year for the Avalanche. The clutch play would continue throughout his career, as Drury almost single handedly defeated the NY Rangers while playing for Buffalo, scoring two game winning goals and one game tying goal in the waning seconds to lead the Sabres to a series victory. Drury’s last bout of heroics came in the 2010 Winter Olympics, when he scored what would prove to be the game winning goal in a 5-3 upset of Canada in group play.

While Drury’s retirement may not be news to a great number of Americans who do not follow hockey, I don’t think one needs to be a hockey fan to appreciate the remarkable career that Drury has had. In the span of just over 20 years, the guy has won a LLWS championship, a NCAA Championship, a Stanley Cup, and his personal accomplishments include rookie of the year in the NHL and MVP of NCAA Hockey. To me, that is one heckuva resume that needs a bit more celebration.

Victory at the last second

By Ryan Potts

The Highlanders knew that traveling to Canton last Wednesday to face the 3A Pisgah Bears would be a good test for their revamped lineup, but they knew that as long as they worked hard, they would enjoy the outcome. Fortunately for Highlands, that outcome was a positive one as Junior Temba Lama followed home a free kick from Isaac Beavers to give the Highlanders a victory with only 5.1 seconds left in the match.

While the final score was certainly what the Highlanders were looking at, it was not a reflection of the play that Highlands demonstrated on the field. Their revamped lineup from last year is built more on speed than the aerial attack that they relied upon last season. More speed allows for more opportunities, and the Highlanders certainly had more than their share, dominating possession for the majority of the match but unable to put home a winner until Lama’s late goal.

“While the final score was certainly what the Highlanders were looking at, it was not a reflection of the play that Highlands demonstrated on the field. Their revamped lineup from last year is built more on speed than the aerial attack that they relied upon last season. More speed allows for more opportunities, and the Highlanders certainly had more than their share, dominating possession for the majority of the match but unable to put home a winner until Lama’s late goal. “We certainly had our chances,” said Highlander Coach Chris Green. “That’s why perseverance is so important in soccer, because we had a lot of chances and it would be easy for these kids to become frustrated when you can’t put a goal on the board. But they kept after it and kept

• See SOCCER page 17
A couple of my friends just returned from Belize, Central America. While there, they went tubing. The expedition was replete with the river running through underground caves, life jackets and helmet-mounted lights.

At one point, the guide pointed to a certain spot wherein there lay a Ferdelance (the fist time I’d heard the name). Also known locally as a Tommy-goff, a snake.

This reptile, according to the guide, has an almost irrepressible loathing for the water. The snake was stuck in the cave not be choice but by virtue of flooding waters. The rising river picked him up from wherever he was and deposited him where he didn't want to be. Soon the waters receded but the snake stayed put. Now, his options are only two; take the risk. Slide into the water and very shortly be back on blessed dry terra firma. Too bad that no one can tell the snake. The guide is rather certain the Ferdelance will end his days there in a dark, damp cave.

I think this story is an apt parable of our own lives. Carried from where we are to where we don't want to be, the waters of heartache, disappointment, poor health, failed marriages, wayward children, and much more, rise quickly and move fast.

When the waters abate, there we are in a place we never wanted to be. And our options, forgive me, are rather much like the snake’s. We can stay there, mentally, emotionally, sometimes physically, and die or, we can take a risk and move on in life.

Jesus Christ is a great and loving Savior. Nothing is impossible with Him. He can extricate us from any place or situation. He isn’t afraid of anything and he absolutely controls the waters. He can take you from where you are to the solid ground of a personal relationship with him.

Some would consider following Jesus Christ a risk. Uncertain. But that isn’t true at all. He is the only sure thing in all of life. Go ahead. Give Him your hand. Let Him lead you out of the dark, damp cave. You don’t belong there. And do it now, won’t you? He is waiting to give you His help.
It's getting hot in here!

Onemight wonder why I'm commenting on Gore's disgusting display when there are so many meaningful issues going on these days. Honesty compels me to admit – I enjoy it. I could write about the Obamarama bus tour. Maybe later.

I could write about his 10-day vacation to Martha's Vineyard. Maybe later. I could write about his promise to announce a can't-miss plan to eliminate unemployment and fix our tragic economy – in September. Why wait for a month? Why has he not put his plan into action months ago, yea, years ago? Maybe later.

Back to reality. From thenewamerican.com: “In recent years, former Vice President Al Gore has been the object of a great deal of humor – and ire – for his extremist views and hypocritical actions when it comes to the environment. But a bizarre rant from the man who was once heartbeats away from becoming President of these United States calls forth a term which Americans want nowhere near the Oval Office – unhinged.

The ideology of manmade global warming has fallen on hard times in recent years due to a series of revelations that have fundamentally undermined the credibility of the ‘science’ and its advocates. Beginning with ‘Climategate’ and ‘Glaciergate’ and continuing through such public spectacles as the implosion of the December 2009 Copenhagen Climate Change Conference, polling data has repeatedly demonstrated that the aims of climate change scientists have fallen on hard time with the public.”

Enough of his lunacy. I don't take pleasure when someone truly does go off the rails but in his case, I think it’s just the true vulgar nature of the man showing through. Good grief, he's made enough money from his “grand scam” – give it up Al; give us all a break. Although, I would miss his winter meetings when the coldest and snowiest weather in centuries invariably strike the meeting sites. I do believe that Gore has a supernatural ability, ironically, to attract cold weather. His record is nearly spotless in recent years.

There is an old saying – “good things come in threes.” I hold to the belief that it is true. I'm not superstitious, but I am hopeful. First, Bernie Madoff, swindler par-excellence, who, after 40 years of snookering the high-end, investing public out of $65 billion, was outed and will now spend the next 150 years in the dink. Second, back to good old buddy Al Gore, who was neutered intellectually but still runs free, being vulgar and obtuse. Nobody knows for sure how much he has benefited by his various schemes based on the evils of what you are polluting the air with this very minute by exhaling CO2, but it is substantial, surely in the Madoff’s vicinity. Al is still running around loose, but hopefully, someday, he will be subdued, shackled and sequestered.

What a wonderful completion of our hoped-for trifecta would it be to have our…

See SWANSON page 17
while protecting neighboring landowners, almost two years later neither the Planning Board nor the Macon County Commission can reach a consensus on how far the ordinance should go.

The committee, the Planning Board and the MC Commission are at a stalemate.

Of late, at the crux of the matter is the Slope Movement Hazard Maps which were created by the NCGS. The maps show evidence of “old” slope movement and potential new movement on slopes throughout Macon County, as well as Western NC, and such are a logical tool to use in the formation of a steep slope ordinance, say proponents.

But minutes of the Aug. 2 MC Planning Board meeting illustrate the schism on the board.

Jimmy Goodman wanted the MC Commission to vote on whether the Planning Board should continue working on a Slope Ordinance at all and said he doesn’t believe Macon County needs a Slope Ordinance right now.

But Al Slagle said the arguments concerning the maps were centered on emotions rather than facts and that the recommendations proposed by the Slope Development Committee represent compromise. “Any further compromise on the recommendations by the planning board would put public safety at risk,” he said.

Larry Stenger said the Slope Movement Hazard Maps should be used as an educational component rather than a regulatory component because he’s not comfortable with the “statistical probabilities” of the maps.

Lamar Sprinkle said he could not support a slope ordinance if the Slope Movement Hazard Maps were involved with the committee’s recommendations. “I don’t feel the maps created by the NCGS were created for the intent of developing ordinances,” he said.

However, Lewis Penland said he didn’t think the proposed ordinance recommendations were overly restrictive. “It would be a mistake to exclude the maps from a Slope Development Ordinance,” he said. “Regardless of what happens with the ordinance, the maps will still exist and continue to be used more and more.”

At the August Macon County Commission meeting, citizens against the steep slope ordinance — many who are aligned with Macon County’s Tea Party and Property Owners of America — urged commissioners to scrap the idea.

But instead of completely scrapping the idea, the board voted to uphold the Planning Board’s decision which was to change course for now and begin focusing on incorporating construction standards from the recommendations into the existing Sedimentation and Erosion Control Ordinance.

But at the previous Planning Board meeting, Penland assured the Planning Board the Slope Ordinance would be revisited at a later date.

Now a group of Macon County citizens are fighting back.

MaconSense.org has launched a public outreach campaign to build support for a steep slope ordinance in the County.

Called MaconSense.org, the new organization has created a website with information about the issue, an online petition and other tools to allow the community to express its support for a slope ordinance.

Additionally, the group plans to reach out to Macon County citizens by organizing petition drives, planning public events and running public service advertisements on local media outlets.

“For too long special interest groups have dominated the conversation about steep slope development in Macon County,” said Kathy Tinsley, a spokesperson for the group. “MaconSense.org was created to make sure that everyday people have a voice in the future of their county.”

The new group is not limiting itself to the slope development issue and hopes to bring together citizens of all walks of life and political persuasions to advocate for common sense solutions to important issues facing the county.

“Regular people have been pushed out of the process by all the heated rhetoric,” said Tinsley. “That’s a shame. We need our elected officials to move past partisan bickering and get back to serving the public interest. The only way that is going to happen is if citizens feel like they have a say in the direction of our County.”

According to MaconSense.org a slope ordinance would benefit the county by:

- Protecting property rights,
- Promoting economic development,
- Supporting local business,
- Reducing the risk of catastrophe,
- Preserving our valuable resources.

The most active opposition to a slope ordinance has come from property rights groups who oppose any land use regulation. But MaconSense.org contends that protecting citizens’ property...
that Duke was already OK'd a 5% rate increase effective Sept. 1.

The 17% increase, which the company applied for in July to cover costs spent on retiring and replacing power plants and equipment to comply with environmental regulations, is a separate deal and if OK'd users could potentially see a 25% increase on their monthly bills. The 5% increase is to offset the company's recent fuel rating increase which incurred to generate power across its system. Duke maintains that the increase is needed to offset higher expenses for nuclear fuel and coal.

At its Aug. 13 meeting, the Macon County Commission signed three petitions/resolutions requesting/opposing policies being considered by Duke in one case and the state in two other cases that will negatively affect Macon County and its citizens.

Duke's 5% increase was not discussed, as County Manager Jack Horton and the commission knew nothing about it. However, concerning the potential 17% increase, commissioners agreed "the timing and the size don't mix."

The resolution says "Macon County citizens continue to feel the effects of the downturn in the local, state and national economy, including a 10% unemployment rate in the county."

Furthermore, there are many residents on a fixed or low income who are in no position to absorb such a significant increase and finally, "the timing of this proposed rate increase is particularly burdensome and would place an undue hardship on the citizens of Macon County."

Though encouraging the NC Utilities Commission to reject Duke's request, the commission doesn't expect miracles. "The end game purpose of the county adopting this resolution is to decrease the potential increase," said Commission Chairman Brian McClellan.

Commissioner Kevin Corbin said unfortunately Macon County doesn't have much of a choice because Duke is the only game in town.

But the board agreed if it says nothing, it would be like telling citizens to "just live with it" which isn't acceptable.

Macon County is just one of the state's 100 counties opposing Duke's increase.

The other two issues speak to the state's habit of lumping Western North Carolina into the same category as the rest of the state with no consideration to the area's topography or weather.

At the Aug. 13 meeting, the commission discussed a draft Petition for Adjustment to Need Determination which basically asks the state to issue a certificate of need for a dialysis center in Macon County.

Currently, the closest dialysis center is in Sylva, and given grueling winter weather of late, the life-sustaining and oftentimes life-saving trip from various points in the county to Sylva has been a tremendous hardship, reads the petition.

Having a dialysis center in the county would not cost the county anything, but private facilities need to know it will be profitable and before anything can happen, the certificate of need must be issued.

"There are only a handful of counties in the state – all in Western North Carolina — without a dialysis center and we are one of them," said Commissioner Ronnie Beale.

He said the mountainous terrain and road conditions during winter weather makes driving over Cowee Mountain for dialysis in Sylva very hazardous.

A final petition will be submitted for approval at the September commission meeting listing the adverse effects on the population if the certificate isn’t issued; alternatives if the certificate isn’t issued; the fact that duplication of services would not occur if the certificate is issued; and reiterating the fact that the commission is responsible for the safety, quality of life, access to medical care and the value of having a dialysis center in the county.

The third issue involves the opposition to the proposed merger of Southwestern Community College with others in the North Carolina Community College system.

"As commissioners we need to be proactive and tell our legislators not to throw a blanket over all the counties — to look at a map and see where we are," said Commissioner Beale.

Commissioner Corbin said he's all for sharing costs for the purposes of downsizing but legislators must look at the topography here where local control in this case is necessary.

Commissioner McClellan said it's clearly a hardship for students to drive 90 miles one way to take a specific course.

Among other things, the resolution states that SCC's three-county service area including Swain County is 1,534 square miles — an area 30% larger than the state of Rhode Island — and serves a population of approximately 78,000 people.

Also, based on the growing programs offered at the Macon campus, the county...
HCP’S ‘Sirens’ continues Thursday through Sunday

The North Carolina premiere of the charming and clever comedy, “Sirens,” is the Highlands Cashiers Players first play of their new season. It continues Thursday through Sunday, August 25-28, at the Performing Arts Center in Highlands.

The story concerns a middle-aged couple, Sam and Rose Abrams, who take a cruise to the Greek Islands, hoping to bring a little romance back into their marriage of 25 years. On this voyage, Sam and only Sam hears an irresistible melody wafting over the water and follows it to a strange destination where he encounters a siren—yes, a beautiful siren of ancient legend, luring ships to their destruction. Sam’s adventure and its unexpected consequences when he returns home are totally entertaining.

The cast includes professional actor David Milford, four of HCP’s veteran actors—Jenny King, Laura Zepeda, Michelle Hott, Marsha Shmalo—and a talented new actor, Chris Hess. The production team includes Steve Hott, Jim Gordon, Tanji Armor, Ruby Sanders, Ken Knight, Lance Trudel, Dean Zuch, Andy Timan, and Katie Flynn. John Williams designed the sound.

Comments heard among last week’s audience “totally professional in all aspects”... “very modern with Facebook and cell phones”...... “actors did a great job”...... “tender and hilarious moments”...... “a production worthy of the premiere in North Carolina.”

Laura Zepeda as the Siren in the Highlands Cashiers Players’ production “Sirens” running through Sun., Aug. 28, at the Performing Arts Center in Highlands. Call 526-8084 for tickets.
**Highlands Area Upcoming Events**

**Pianist to perform to benefit HCCDC**

Pianist Randall Atcheson will perform at 5 p.m. Sept. 3 to benefit the Highlands Community Child Development Center. The free concert will be held at the First Presbyterian Church in Highlands. Patron and sponsor reserved seating is available by calling 526-0355. Donations to the HCCDC will be greatly appreciated.

Tuition and state subsidy programs cover only about 60 percent of the operating budget. Parents of the approximately 66 children who attend the center work for 50 to 60 businesses in our community. The families depend on HCCDC and the businesses depend on these workers. This is a win-win situation for all. Don’t miss this opportunity to hear this acclaimed pianist while supporting the HCCDC.

Randall is known as a musical Renaissance man who has recently performed his 10th solo concert at Carnegie Hall. This is an opportunity that will be unforgettable.

**Come eat pancakes in Scaly**

Plan to bring your family and friends to Scaly Mountain for a scrumptious breakfast in the mountains at the newly remodeled historic old Scaly School House.

The breakfasts are held on the fourth Saturday - May through October from 7:30 to 10:30 a.m. This is the seventh year that the women in Scaly Mountain Women’s Club, who are known for the culinary skills, have sponsored these breakfasts.

It will feature a full meal of piping hot homemade pancakes (with or without blueberries), patty sausage, coffee and juice in the historic old Scaly School House (It is on the corner of N Highway 106 and Buck Knob Road in downtown Scaly).

Guests will be treated to a seated meal either in the old school house or on the deck overlooking the mountains. Cost is $5.50 for adults and $3.50 for children.

The breakfast will be served by club members or you may order takeout, if you choose.

Proceeds from the event provide scholarships for local students of all ages who wish to continue their post-secondary education. They also benefit area non-profit human service agencies that serve the Scaly Mountain community. Come and join the best cooks in Western North Carolina for an morning of fun enjoying the friendly folks in Scaly Mountain and an unforgettable breakfast.

For more information, call Susan Bankston, (828) 526-9952.

**Thursdays at the Nature Center**

**Sept. 1**

Some we love, some we hate, some we eat

Our relationships with animals are varied and complicated. We can love some, hate others, and eat the rest. Anthrozoology is the study of the relationships between humans and animals, and is the basis for Dr. Hal Herzog's book, “Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat: Why It's So Hard to Think Straight About Animals.”

Join us on Thursday, Sept. 1st at the Highlands Nature Center for our "Think About Thursdays" dosing event with Dr. Hal Herzog. Professor of Psychology at Western Carolina University, Dr. Herzog has investigated the complex psychology of our interactions with other species for over twenty years. He is an expert in the field with a sense of humor, ensuring that this Zahner Conservation Lecture will be both informative and entertaining.

Visit www.haltzerg.com and be sure to check out his blog. The presentation will take place at 6 p.m. and is free of charge.

For more information about our Think About Thursdays series, or to become a member of the Highlands Biological Foundation and show your support for our activities, please call 828-526-2221 or visit our website at www.wcu.edu/hbs.
Highlands Area Upcoming Events

PULL OUT

Friday from 6:30 to 9 PM. Music by “SWINGTIME BAND.” For more information Call 828-369-9155.
• The annual Alpha Delta Pi Sorority alumni luncheon is at Wildcat Cliffs Country Club at 11:30 a.m. All ADPs are invited to come and renew acquaintances and college memories. To make a reservation or for more information, call Emily Buskirk at 787-1015 or Beverly Howell at 482-0473.

Saturday, Aug. 27
• At the Hen House on Main Street, an in-store demonstration by Sally’s Jams from 10-4.
• At Dusty’s Afternoon Tea from 304:30. $10 per person. Call for reservations. 526-2762.
• Eco Tour: Cherokee Trails of Jackson and Macon Counties Walk join Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust and Wild South Cultural Heritage Director, Lamar Marshall, and learn about local Cherokee heritage and the evolution of Indian trails to our modern

12th Annual Native Plant Symposium
September 16-17

Clear your calendar – the Highlands Biological Foundation’s 12th Annual Native Plant Symposium will be held this Sept. 16 and 17 at the Performing Arts Center.

This year’s symposium promises to be our best yet! Woody plants will take the spotlight for the symposium, with field trips and guest speakers focusing on the value of native trees and shrubs in gardening and landscaping. Registrants can choose their field trip from a list of wonderful options that includes a tea party held in the Botanical Garden, a tour of the Southern Highlands Reserve, and several guided hikes. We can’t think of a better way to spend your time in Highlands than learning about the area and its native plants.

We have another exciting lineup of guest speakers this year, featuring Dr. Michael Dirr, Professor of Horticulture at the University of Georgia, who is the author of the Manual of Woody Landscape Plants and is a legend in the horticulture world. In addition to field trips and guest speakers, the symposium will conclude with a wine reception and native plant auction.

One hundred percent of the proceeds from the symposium go to the Highlands Botanical Garden, which residents and visitors of Highlands have enjoyed since 1962 when it was established as a refuge for over 450 species of southern Appalachian plants. Within walking distance from town, and open to the public every day of the year, the 12-acre Garden is an invaluable resource to the region and we look forward to celebrating the Garden’s 50th birthday in 2012!

Because seating is limited to 200, early registration for the 2011 Native Plant Symposium is encouraged. Visit www.wcu.edu/hbs/NPSymp.htm to register on-line and download a brochure, or call 828-526-2221. We also welcome visitors to our office, located at 265 North Sixth Street. Thank you for supporting the Highlands Biological Foundation.

The Center for Life Enrichment PRESENTS:

Fri, Aug 26 Can the USA Democratize the World? with Dr. Charles Wise, Founder of the John Glenn School of Public Affairs, 10-12 at PAC $25/$35
Wed, Aug 31 Brunch at Morningside B&B with Martha Porter 9:30-2:00 (Lunch included) $50/$60
Th, Sept 1, 8, 15 King Lear with Dr. Terry Nienhuis, 10:00-12:00 at PAC $75/$95
Wed, Sept 7 The Lonely Hunter: The Work of Carson McCullers with Dr. Thornton Jordan, 10:00-12:00 at PAC
Fri, Sept 9 The Mount Vernon Ladies’ Assoc.: 150 Years of Preservation with Boyce Ansley, 10:00-12:00 at PAC

Classes are $20 for members and $30 for non-members unless otherwise noted.
For more information call 828 526-8811 or go to www.clehighlands.com for our full schedule.

(Certain classes may not be listed here if they are already full)
Highlands Area Upcoming Events

Cashiers Arts and Crafts Show
Sept. 3 & 4 at Village Green

The Rotary Club of Cashiers Valley invites everyone to an Arts and Crafts show on Labor Day Weekend, at the Village Green in Cashiers. Gates open on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 3 and 4, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days.

There will be 57 vendors of fine arts and crafts along with food and fun. Admission to the show is $3 dollars and all entrance fees go to the charitable work of the Cashiers Valley Rotary Club.

In addition, a raffle winner can choose a large, flat-screen TV, a stainless steel barbecue grill or $2,000 cash. Tickets are $10 dollars each and there will be some available at the show. Also buy tickets from Rotary Club members until the drawing on September 4th.

Help support numerous projects in Cashiers and surrounding areas, and enjoy a day with friends and family with some of the finest artists and craftsmen from across the country.

Bel Canto hits year 19

Once again Bel Canto will bring some of the finest performers in the world of opera to Highlands for one performance of beautiful music.

Bel Canto will celebrate its 19th year with a recital on Sept. 11, 2011 at the Martin-Lipscomb Performing Arts Center. Following the recital will be an elegant dinner at the Highlands Country Club. Patrons have long been used to world-class performers and this year will be no exception.

This year’s performance will feature a soprano and a tenor. This week we’ll feature the soprano.

The soprano performing this year will be Rachel Cobb. Hailed as “fiercely dramatic” (The London Times) having presented “one of the best impersonations I have seen” (Opera Magazine) and possessing a “pure soprano with charm and fragility” (Classical Voice) and “real vocal thrust” (Opera News), she has earned critical acclaim in The United States and Europe as a total performer with incredible dramatic intensity.

Past engagements for Ms. Cobb include Miss Jessel in Glyndebourne’s production of The Turn of the Screw, as Mimi for the Duluth Festival Opera, Opera on the James and in Opera Pacific’s production of La Bohème, for which she was named “Most Promising Young Artist,” as Cio Cio San in Madama Butterfly, as Donna Anna in Don Giovanni with Madison Opera and the Westfield Symphony, as Pallade in Gluck’s Paride ed Elena at The Caramoor Festival, Fiordiligi in Cosi fan Tutte, and as Beauty in Giannini’s Beauty and the Beast with Baltimore Opera and Kitty Hart in the Opera Pacific production of Dead Man Walking.

Past years’ performances have provided funds for the Highlands School Music program as well as the permanent art collection of The Bascom Gallery and in 2009 we added the Highlands Community Child Development Center.

So put Sunday, September 11 on your calendar now and plan to attend the nineteenth Annual Bel Canto Recital! To contact Bel Canto and get on the mailing list, please call 828.526.1947.

House of Wong

....Betty Wong
Cordially invites you to a
Ladies Only
TRUNK SHOW
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By appointment
Only
10 am - 4 pm
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Hear What’s in the Heart
On Stage
September 30-October 9

Join us for appetizers & full bar
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For Tickets, call or visit the Box Office:
828-526-2695 362 Oak Street, Highlands

Understanding agency relationships

As a Buyer or Seller, your success depends, in part, upon how well you understand what I consider to be one of the most essential aspects of real estate: agency relationships.

Unless you are experienced in real estate transactions, the term and its meaning are a bit foreign (and, admittedly, the term sounds completely boring and bureaucratic). In fact, you may be tempted to just gloss over understanding it when your agent introduces you to the concept.

Warning: when it comes to agency/fiduciary relationships, what you do not know can, in fact, hurt you. So let’s dive in and see what all the fuss is about.

What exactly does agency relationships mean? In its most simple form, agency relationships explain for whom the real estate agent/firm works – Buyer or Seller (or both). In other words, to whom does the agent owe her or his loyalties and advocacy, and what is the agent permitted or required to do for each party?

Let’s say you want to sell your property, and you decide to interview several firms as a part of your decision-making process. Upon meeting the agents, one of the very first items an agent should discuss with you (as required by law) is agency relationships. Not only should you understand how the agent may bring Buyers to you (as an agent of the Seller, as a Buyer’s agent, or as a dual agent), but also you should be aware that until you have a signed listing agreement in place, your confidentiality is not protected.

For example, let’s say you sit down with Agent A and immediately begin talking about your need to sell quickly and what you want to net out of the sale. You delve into personal and financial matters and before you know it, Agent A knows considerable sensitive information about your situation. (Now an ethical Agent A would stop you immediately before you disclosed anything and would carefully explain agency relationships at that point so that you would be protected. For purposes of this explanation, let’s assume Agent A does not provide the required disclosure to you.)

You meet with two other agents (say Agent B and Agent C) and repeat the process with both (and assume again that neither provide the required disclosure). Now there are three agents who possess this information. You decide upon Agent B and sign listing documents.

Soon after you list the property, Agent A shows your property to a Buyer as a Buyer’s Agent (in this instance, Agent A’s loyalties lie solely with the Buyer, not you). Agent A has a fiduciary relationship to the Buyer and by law, must disclose everything she or he knows about your property and your situation. The Buyer now knows your level of motivation, as well as precisely what you would accept in an offer. Needless to say, your ability to negotiate with strength and receive top dollar for your property and best terms has been severely compromised.

Remember: as a Seller, do not disclose anything other than material facts about the property or your personal situation to prospective listing agents. Once you have a signed agreement in place, everything you disclose must be protected as confidential.

Another area of confusion in the agency relationships realm is dual agency. Dual agency comes into play when the Seller has sanctioned the listing firm to act in that capacity which enables the firm to represent both the Seller and the Buyer. The key difference in a dual agency role is that the firm may not advocate for one party at the other’s expense and must remain neutral throughout the entire process (from writing the Offer to communicating the Offer to closing the transaction).

This type of agency requires additional focus and finesse from the agent, and if handled professionally and properly, can prove to work exceedingly well for all parties in the transaction. If you sanction dual agency, continue to ask your agent for clarification throughout the process when any questions arise. A key point to remember: if any agent (not just your listing agent) within your listing firm brings you a Buyer as a Buyer’s Agent, dual agency is in play.

To learn more about agency relationships, please reference the NC Real Estate Commission’s brochure entitled “Working with Real Estate Agents.” You may download a copy from the Commission’s website (www.ncrec.gov), or feel free to stop by our office anytime to pick up a copy and ask us questions.

Knowledge is power. Understanding fully who is representing whom in a real estate transaction places you on the path to success.

• Susie DeVille Schiffli, ME, ABR, SFR, is Owner/Broker-in-Charge of White Oak Realty Group. Her areas of expertise include real estate investments, niche marketing, social media, and strategic property positioning. An expert in entrepreneurship and anthropology, Susie applies her acumen in human behavior toward negotiating and advocating on behalf of her clients. White Oak Realty Group’s sales office is located at 125 South Fourth Street in the heart of the retail district in Highlands. For more information, visit WhiteOakRG.com or call (828) 526-8118.
Chad Reed, resident piano-man at the Verandah, will have an old-fashioned “sing-a-long” in the Dug Out Lounge every Friday and Saturday night 9-11 p.m. through Sept. 17. Tantalizing drink specials will also be featured. Reservations Recommended. Call 828-526-2338.
... LETTERS continued from page 2

that would print it. Maybe we should get him elected vice president, as nobody in their right mind would want to follow the current president we have now. Thanks again for the great column.

Haydn McLean
Highlands and Georgia

Free trade is the main problem

Dear Editor,

Ask yourself why our corporations haven't been doing well in recent times. Do you remember when all the corporations in America were doing well and providing for our parents and grandparents for many years? Bart McPherson of Glenville hit the nail on the head in his letter last week when he recognized that "Free Trade" has killed our economy. That now makes two of us who understand the real problem. Over recent years, the lawyer/politicians, with no business experience, opened up our country to foreign raiders by enacting "Free Trade" laws without taking the imports. "Every time you buy the $6 toaster made in China vs. the $15 toaster made in America, something terrible happens."

This open invitation for foreign companies to come here and take share of market from our corporations has crippled our economy. The prime example is our auto companies, all of which have seen hard times. GM is no longer the world's largest. Technically, they should all be out of business because it is very hard to compete against a foreign made auto that can be sold here for half the price of the American made one. Just look at the $10,000 KIA and realize that an American made car like that would cost at least $20,000. The only thing that kept our American car companies in business is that certain Americans were loyal to their brand of pickup truck, jeep or van.

There are two reasons that this is happening: foreign governments subsidize their auto companies by providing incredibly cheap steel from government owned factories that pay workers $1 per hour. Secondly, the auto unions shake down our auto companies for outrageous wages and benefits, with assembly line workers making $60 an hour or more. The autoworkers union negotiated one contract with an auto manufacturer which dictated that if they closed a plant, all laid off employees would have to be paid $100,000 each for four years.

Businessmen went to the Chinese government and wanted to buy in to the government owned steel manufacturing companies and China said "No Way." Yet, in America, our decimated steel industry is now 53% foreign owned. We no longer have the capacity to produce enough steel to win a war the way we did in the past.

GM manufactures and sells cars in China. The Chinese government requires them to buy all their materials in China. They do not want GM to bring anything from the U.S.

Last year, our lawyer/politicians called in our auto manufacturers to appear before congress and berated them. These inexperienced businessmen in congress had no idea what to ask them. I've run large and small corporations and I can tell that that they should have asked them for a report on why they are not doing well, and what can congress do to level the playing field and make them healthy again.

Congress needs to pass laws that will restore the ability of our corporations to compete with international companies. Think about passing a law that says "All cars sold in the U.S. have to be manufactured with steel made in the U.S." This would revitalize American industry. All the mills in PA and Ohio would open up again. Billions would pour into the U.S. economy. This would be the greatest stimulus plan we could create in this country. We would again become the world's largest steel producer.

We have a business problem in this country and it will take real businessmen to solve it. We elected a President because he is an outstanding orator. He strains to sound "Presidential!" He never worked in business, never had a real job, never punched a clock, never managed or supervised people, never ran a department, never created budgets and forecasts and never wrote a business plan. He and our congress seem to have no idea how to solve this business problem that is crushing our economy.

First, there should be a congressional investigation into the reasons why our large corporations aren't doing well with suggestions from them as to how we can level the playing field for them. (Read the book "Japan, Inc." and you will understand exactly what we should be doing). Secondly, we need to put appropriate taxes on imports and find other ways to make our corporations compete and prosper. This emphasis on expanding small businesses so they employ more people is ridiculous, not realistic and is way overblown. The real answer is in restoring health to the American corporations that provided for us for many years. Send real businessmen to congress.

Jim Sottile
Franklin NC

The thing about ideologues is they don't let facts get in their way

Dear Editor,

My wife and I just arrived here to spend a few cool summer weeks. As usual we stop by Ingle's to pick up a Laurel and the Highlands' Newspaper. On a lark, I took a look to see just how far
... READING continued from page 1

Board member Gary Shields urged the board to consider keeping the focus on the kindergarten through third-grade range to ensure the program’s maximum benefit.

In other news, Highlands School cafeteria manager June Zachary was named Macon County Support Person of the Year and Dr. Brigman cited Mrs. Zachary’s years of faithful service as the key to her winning the honor.

... ETJ continued from page 1

ETJ believe neighbors can do whatever they want with their property and vice versa. They don’t believe they need the government to intervene on anyone’s behalf. Clark said on several levels the relationship between ETJ citizens and the town is a symbiotic one – but members of the audience disagreed, saying “Highlands needs them; they don’t need Highlands.”

Though the state of the nation’s economy and the Obama administration peppered comments made by some citizens against ETJ, the crux of the matter – regardless of political party lines – centered around property rights, which is considered a sacred cow in Western North Carolina.

Previous County Commissioner and ETJ representative on the Planning Board Ricky Bryson was the first to speak and pointed out that since ETJ was adopted, the county has adopted several land use ordinances – soil and sedimentation, height restrictions, high-impact and subdivision – which has taken care of the concerns that spurred ETJ in the first place – protecting the corridors and the watershed.

“This is your chance to right a wrong,” he said. “Very few municipalities take property for which they don’t intend to give services or annex as Highlands did.”

Adopting ETJ was initiated by the town’s Land Use Plan whose mission is to protect the Highlands Plateau including the town’s water supply, the natural environment and the highway corridors.

As such, ETJ encompasses a one-mile radius beyond the corporate limits of Highlands including portions of Horse Cove and Clear Creek even though those two areas aren’t included in the zoning aspect of ETJ – the legality of which is now being questioned. According to the NC Institute of Government, it’s legal to exempt areas within the one-mile radius but it’s not legal to include areas like Horse Cove and Clear Creek and not zone them.

The two country clubs in the ETJ last fall – Highlands Falls Country Club and Cullasaja Club – were exempted from ETJ on the grounds that their building codes and land use plans are more stringent than the town’s. That action has fostered an “us against them” attitude with citizens in the ETJ. They claim if protecting the watershed really was the reason for ETJ, the country clubs should have been included simply due to their golf course pollutants and sediment that have contaminated the plateau’s watershed over the years.

Furthermore, trusting Highlands’ town government was irrevocably jeopardized when at the November 2005 public hearing on the matter, ETJ was adopted despite the fact that 85% to 90% of those present objected to it.

“This whole thing has split the community and this is not the place it used to be,” said Harold Neely of Clear Creek. “I have the right to do what I want with my property as long as I don’t injure someone else.”

That belief is the ember ETJ has fanned. Government, in this case Highland’s government, telling people what they can do with their property when the citizens being regulated can’t vote and have actually chosen to live outside the corporate limits due to the liberties that choice affords them.

Specifically, citizens in ETJ are concerned about zoning designations assigned their property along the corridors and beyond.

Basically, all property uses are grandfathered but if property changes hands, its designation could change. Property along the corridors is commercial (B5) so residential property on the corridors would become commercial and commercial property beyond the corridors would become residential if it changes hands. This represents a huge problem for citizens in ETJ.

“This means my son, who owns a business that has been in existence since 1946, can’t sell it,” said Merlin Crowe. That place of business is in an ETJ area now slated as residential.

The ETJ issue is far from over – it will be discussed at the Sept. 6 Town Board meeting.

– Kim Lewicki
First Pour Le Pink 5K Walk/Run

The first annual Pour le Pink, a 3.2 mile fun Walk/Run to support local breast health and women's services, will be held on Saturday, October 15 at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital (HCH). The funds raised will go toward maintaining the hospital’s spectrum of breast health and women’s services as well as financial aid for patients.

“Pour le Pink will be a great benefit for our local communities. It will help to build a lasting fund for women’s services enabling us to stay up to date with critical services, equipment and provide our patients the best quality care possible,” said race organizer Callie Calloway, who is the Communications Specialist at HCH.

The race will start on the campus of HCH, travel to Buck Creek Road, down Cheney Lane, looping back to the hospital campus for the finish. Event goers are invited to participate as runners, walkers and individuals or teams. Prizes will be awarded to the top three places female/male runners in each age group as well as team awards.

“We encourage everyone to join us in the fun,” said Calloway. “The event will not only benefit HCH, but foster community awareness of women’s health and wellness. This is a great opportunity to support the hospital that helps keep our community healthy.”

Sponsorship opportunities from $100 to $1000 are available. Registration for Pour le Pink is underway. Early entry fee is $20 for adults, if received on or before September 30th. Late entries received after that date will cost $30. Child rate is $5. The 5k race is open to male/female runners and walkers of all ages will begin at 8am; fun walk/run at 8:15am.

Call Callie Calloway, race coordinator, at (828) 526-1313 for more information.

HCH’S director of Cardiac Rehabilitation lectures on diet

“The Anti-Inflammatory Diet”

“Eating to live and eating to prevent chronic diseases is a reality” says Highlands-Cashiers Hospital’s HealthTracks Wellness Center Director Yvonne Smith, MHS, RD, CDE. “A healthy diet consisting of inflammation-reducing foods can lower the risk of developing cancer, cardiovascular disease, arthritis and Alzheimer’s.”

Earlier this month on August 15, Smith presented “The Anti-Inflammatory Diet” to community residents at a complementary Lunch and Learn held on the Hospital’s campus.

“Eating a wide variety of foods, emphasizing fresh foods of high nutritional quality, avoiding refined sugar and processed foods, while consuming the appropriate number of calories to maintain or attain an optimal/healthy weight are the basics of the Anti-Inflammatory Diet,” says Smith. “Cold water fish, omega-3 packed flaxseed, fresh fruits, steamed vegetables, tree nuts and organic meat, poultry and dairy are ideal foods to keep you on the right path.”

Smith stressed that chronic inflammation is the root cause of many serious diseases. Inflammation can be seen on the body’s surface as swelling, redness, heat, and/or pain but internally can be hard to detect. Although inflammation is the body’s natural healing process, persistent inflammation damages the body and increases risk of degenerative diseases.

“This special anti-inflammatory diet is actually not a “diet” but a lifestyle change,” said Smith. “Choosing foods across the color spectrum and foods low on the food chain provide a way of eating packed with anti-inflammatory nutrients.”

Red foods such as tomatoes, pink grapefruit, watermelon contain lycopene

“It takes a lot to impress me.”

“Over the years, I’ve seen it all! But I’ve never seen the quality surgical experience I had at the HCH Surgery Center. I had a hernia that popped up and it was not pleasant. I went to Dr. Noell and he performed laparoscopic hernia surgery assisted by Dr. Mark Shoptaugh. When I say that I was walking around town that same afternoon enjoying our beautiful community and in no pain, it surprised me, but I guess I shouldn’t have been. I went to HCH because I had heard of their Board Certified Surgeons from friends.
I’m writing this because I want others to know what a fine experience I had, so thanks to all at HCH Surgery for this and to all of you out there, if you ever need surgery, you can be assured that HCH surgeons are there for you as well.”

-Lou Miller
Highlands, NC
Today's LASIK Technology

Since LASIK became a household word in the late 90s, advances in technology have exceeded all expectations. At a nearly unprecedented level, LASIK has become the trusted way for people to improve their functional vision. And judging by the numbers, the Intralase Method (All laser LASIK), using AMO's Intralase™ FST Technology, has become the gold standard for LASIK.

Intralase is one name you have probably heard of and for good reason; Intralase was the first laser approved by the FDA to replace the vibrating handheld microkeratome blade for the flap creation step of LASIK or step 1 of 2 in the LASIK process. Increasingly, successful LASIK procedures start with Intralase™ Technology which clearly has clinical advantages by delivering biomechanical superiority, excellent visual acuity, and unmatched safety. At Blue Laser Group by replacing the blade commonly used for corneal flap creation with an Intralase laser, LASIK eye surgery is safer than ever before.

Another name you may know is Allegretto Wave. Since Blue Laser Group introduced Northeast Georgia's first Allegretto Wave laser the Allegretto’s superior results have been amazing. This laser is used in the second step of LASIK. Many patients who would have needed two treatments with other lasers have achieved 20/20 vision (or better) with just one treatment with the Allegretto’s advanced technology. Your eyes are as unique as your fingerprints and the most precise laser vision correction technology addresses these highly individual characteristics. Wave front technology captures each eye’s unique imperfections with far greater accuracy than ever before, translates that information into digital treatment instructions and sends them directly to the Allegretto Wave Excimer Laser System.

What does all this mean to you? It means highly personalized treatment of the conditions that have been creating your vision problems, plus the confidence that Dr. Blue is using the most advanced state-of-the-art technologies to help you attain your vision goals. Evaluations and postoperative visits can be made in any of our locations for your convenience.

In his book "Lasik," Dr. Blue discusses his use of the Intralase™ and Allegretto Wave laser technologies for LASIK and his choice to own these state-of-the-art technologies rather than rent or use equipment that has been used by other surgeons.

Investment in state-of-the-art technologies such as these is a factual measure of commitment to results. An independent LASIK surgeon like Dr. Richard Blue, committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for his patients, will choose the technology that meets his exacting standards. Dr. Blue won’t compromise those standards by less precise but less expensive equipment or by renting equipment that has been taken off to office and used by other surgeons.

Dr. Blue has shown his commitment by owning state of the art technology to ensure the best possible outcomes for you. LASIK outcomes also depend on the skill, commitment and experience of the doctor who performs your procedure. You are in the best possible hands at Blue Laser Group.

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Ask Dr. Blue

“How do I know if I have glaucoma?”

Phyllis from Highlands, N.C.

Phyllis, Glaucoma is the sneaky thief of vision. Patients are often unaware that they even have it until it has taken a tremendous amount of their vision away. Treatment is typically very simple and is an easy experience for most patients. In my practice, we use a laser treatment and the majority of my patients no longer require the use of glaucoma drops. Early intervention is key with glaucoma, so I encourage people to make regular visits to their Ophthalmologist in order to prevent vision loss through early detection.

~ Richard Blue, M.D.

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... LETTERS from pg 18

into Mr. Swanson's article he'd go before he takes a swipe at the President with his usual biased nonsense.

So this week (August 17th) his article happened to be entitled "God or Government?"... and I'm thinking... oh boy, here we go... Obama is going to get nailed in the very first paragraph. But I was wrong; he actually spent all of paragraphs 1 to 9 giving us a pretty unbiased recap of the turmoil going on in various parts of the world. He didn't even make his first fabrication until paragraph 10, when he wrote that George Bush's administration went on a spending spree, but that of course he had a "Democrat Congress for most of his time in office." As I recall, George Bush had a Republican Congress for six of his eight years (from 2000 to 2006).

But then, there it was, he ended his article with paragraphs 11 to 13, where he did his woes is me... let's take our country back from the liberal black guy in the White House routine, where he says President Obama's policies have just about destroyed our country and our standard of living and caused unemployment (and he probably thinks he is the cause of tornados, floods and droughts too).

Now, on these matters of domestic current events, Mr. Swanson sticks with his typical ideology and never lets sound economic reasoning get in his way. Every economist says you must feed a recession (like Bush tried with TARP and Obama tried with the Stimulus). Just because none of us (Democrat or Republican) likes the word "bail-out," it doesn't mean that it is not a necessary evil sometimes.

Without government help we would have lost at least two out of the big three auto companies (not to mention the jobs of three million Americans). Tax cuts for the rich would not have saved our auto industry, nor have our historically low tax rates helped stave off unemployment. I have no doubt that a Republican president might have had to try the same necessary evils that Obama has tried; and something tells me we wouldn't hear Mr. Swanson whine about it (endlessly). Anyway, blah, blah, blah... no news here... just typical Swanson.

But hold on... stop the presses... he then has the misguided audacity to say that most of our peoples' hopelessness and despair has been created by the President denying that we are a "Christian Nation" and his refusal to support Israel against the Palestinians (also an untruth... but that's a whole other article). And now I know that Mr. Swanson is just a fanatic with a keyboard. I happen to not be of the Christian faith (49% of Americans are not Protestant Christians), but I think its ideals and hopes for mankind are not that dissimilar to those of my own faith, or those of the highest tenets of many of the world's religions.

The founders of our country, the ancestors of whom escaped to our New World to live their lives free to follow the faith of their choice, would not have approved of the way religious zealotry has seeped into our government and politics. They escaped other countries to be free of religious persecution. Zealotry, in any religion, can be a dangerous thing. Mr. Swanson believes that it is the "Godlessness" of the countries in the world that is the cause of their turmoil. The problem, clearly, is that Swanson wants it to be HIS God to which those countries, and our country, must worship.

Although the positive teachings of Christianity, just like those of other religions, are most worthy of trying to observe, for our government to establish that we are a "Christian Nation" Mr. Swanson is an affront to the essence of our founding; and no one should even think about promoting such an agenda. In fact, keep that between you and your church; and let's do unto others Don, as you would have others do unto you.

We are indeed a melting pot, and our country was founded on ideals that would ensure that we were free to believe as we wish. So don't bash the President because he doesn't want to get sucked into a my God's better than your God mentality. It is un-American to even think that that question is appropriate to ask of him.

Richard Lundy
Cashiers, NC

State budgets impact on public education

Dear Editor,

Now that our schools in western North Carolina are underway, it is time to take a look at the devastating impact of the Republican-led state budget on public education in our region. It is also important that a challenge be rendered to the rhetoric advocated by the Republican leadership and particularly by the State Senator from this district, Jim Davis in the Aug. 17 issue of Highlands' Newspaper.

Contrary to the statements presented by Sen. Davis, the state budget for 2011-12 did not fully fund classroom teachers and teacher assistants. To prevent having to select which cuts to be made in a school system, the General Assembly instead required each system to return to the state a significant percentage of their allocated operational resources ($428,000,000), better known as discretionary funds.

By this process, they actually placed the responsibility for making specific cuts on the shoulders of superintendents and local school boards. Since over 80% of education dollars are in people, this meant having to cut teachers, assistant principals, and support staffs or not replacing them as vacancies occur.

Macon County School system was required to return $1.25 million on top of $905,000 last year and $600,000 the year before. These were the very funds that assisted in paying for teachers, state/federal mandated programs, supplies, equipment and student transportation.

Jackson County returned $1.2 million; and, this summer, as teacher vacancies occurred, a number of those positions were not replaced, thus causing class sizes to be increased. In addition, two of its pre-school programs were shut down. Because student buses were not funded appropriately, bus

...
Way reported an aggressive bear chased him up the stairs to his home and scratched his leg. Wildlife has been notified.

At 7:05 p.m., Adam Tyler Crook, 22, of Highlands was arrested for drunk and disorderly conduct on Main Street.

Aug. 19
- At 11:25 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident at Spring and NC 28.
- At 1:30 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident at US 64 and S. 4th Street.
- At 3 a.m., Michael Thomas Beshara, 24, of GA, was arrested for DWI on Main Street.

Aug. 20
- At 12:35 p.m., the dept responded to a 9-1-1 hang up from S. 4th Street but it was unfounded.
- At 3:30 p.m., officers assisted Highlands Fire & Rescue control traffic at the site of a rescue operation on the Cullasaja River.
- At 10:18 p.m., officers conducted a canine search of a car on NC 106.
- During the week, police officers issued 19 citations and responded to 3 alarm activations.

Highlands F&R Dept. log entries from August 17

Aug. 17
- At 12:50 p.m. the dept. responded to a tree on power lines on NC 106.
- At 8:11 p.m. the dept. was first-responders about a woman slumped over in vehicle at Cabe Place. Transported to the hospital.

Aug. 18
- At 3:01 a.m., the dept. was fist-responders to Honeysuckle Lane for a 92-year-old male who had fallen and activated the life-line alarm.
- At 1 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to Wyanoak Road for a medical call. Transferred to the hospital.
- At 1:30 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to Main Street for a medical call. Transferred to the hospital.

Aug. 20
- At 11:05 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to Main Street where a woman had fallen.

Aug. 21
- At 8:09 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to High Pond Road where a woman had fallen. Transported to the hospital.

Aug. 22
- At 4:40 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to Clear Creek Road where a man was deceased.
- At 10:12 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to Pine Street where a woman had fallen. Transported to the hospital.
HELP WANTED

INSURANCE AGENCY IN HIGHLANDS is seeking an agent experienced in both Personal Lines and Commercial Lines for a customer service position. Benefits include employer paid health insurance, employer contribution retirement plan, and access to life & dental coverage. Preferred candidates should have a valid NC Property and Casualty Insurance License. Three years of experience is preferable. To be considered you must be team focused, strongly skilled in customer service, outgoing, and have the ability to engage both by phone and in person. Please apply online at stanberry-ins.com/jobs or fax your resume to 828.586.1363. (9/6)

SERVERS AND KITCHEN HELP NEEDED – Ruka’s and Highlands Smokehouse. Call Ruka’s at 526-3636. (st. 8/17)

HOUSEKEEPERS NEEDED AND SEASONAL FRONT DESK, Highlands Inn and Highlands Inn Lodge. Please stop by 420 main street or 96 Log Cabin Lane for application. (8/24)

PRESSERS EATERY, a popular, established Highlands year round restaurant, is seeking mature, responsible dining room staff including full and part time servers, hostess and dining room manager. If you love meeting interesting people, enjoy having fun in your job come see us. Previous restaurant experience a plus but not a requirement. To make an appointment call Marjorie at 828 526 8847 between the hours of 9-11:30 am and 2-4 p.m.

NEED A JOB? Call Skyline Lodge, Highlands - positions available immediately: Babysitter, Housekeeper, Busser, Dishwasher. 526-2121

SILVER EAGLE – Sales Associate. Must have retail experience. Apply in Person at 370 Main Street. 526-5190.(st. 7/14)

MAIN STREET INN/BISTRO – Servers, bussers, food runners. Call 526-2590 or email resume to: info@mainstreet-inn.com,(st. 7/7)

YARD SALE

FRI., SAT., SUN. – next to ... on the Verandah Restaurant on US 64 west. 10-5 daily. Furniture & miscellaneous.

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MUSICIANS OF ANY LEVEL, for informal, old-time/bluegrass jams in the Highlands area. Fiddle, banjo, bass, mandolin players welcome. Call Rachel at (404) 859-5181 or rachfriday@comcast.net, if interested. (8/24)
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$6 FOR 10 WORDS, 20 CENTS EACH WORD AFTER, ADD A HIGHLIGHT FOR $2

**YARD WORK**  – experienced and reliable. Call 772-626-4628.

**LOOKING FOR HIKING PARTNER.** Call 828-577-7384. (st. 6/30)

**WANTED 2-CAR GARAGE FOR CAR STORAGE.** Will have very little in or out traffic. Year-round lease. Call 850-206-1479 (st 5/19)

**RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL FOR RENT**

**ANNUAL/YEAR ROUND RENTALS.** Now taking applications for these homes: **2BR/2bath upper level condo**—walk to town, screened porch, in a quiet area. $900 monthly, not including utilities, furnished, parking space. **3BR/2bath home**—all on one level, furnished, screened back porch, updated, $900 per month, not including utilities. In town limits, yard and good parking Rental applications subject to credit, and/or criminal check. Call The Chambers Agency, 526-3717 or email jsc@chambersagency.net or come by 401 N. Fifth Street. (8/31)

**3 BR CABIN W/GREAT VIEW FOR RENT** monthly Aug, Sept, and/or Oct. Off Dillard Road—Klein Road—2 bath and huge screened in porch. View can’t be topped! Pets OK. Call 828-526-5174 (8/25)

**SUITE FOR RENT** on a beautiful horse farm on Blue Valley Road 5 miles out of town. The very large in-law-suite on the bottom level of a very large home. Private entrance, private bath, whole house privileges. Private refrigerator, microwave, hot plate and completely furnished with TV. $500 a month + 1/4 of the utilities. Call (828) 787-1170. (st. 6/19)

**DOWNTOWN ON MAIN STAPT** – 1/1, covered balcony, small pets allowed, $650/mo. Call 200-0036(day) or 526-4044(eve) (st.4/7)

**REMODELED EFFICIENCY APARTMENT RIVER RUN II**  
Washer Dryer, Large Deck. Walking distance to Skiing, Swimming, Exercise, and Meeting rooms and Public Golf Coarse $495 monthly annual rent plus utilities. Includes Master Association Amenities. 561-626-7467. (8/18)

**ARCHITECTS PRIVATE 3BED/3BATH HOME.** Stunning open living area. Two stone fireplaces, den, two decks overlooking stream and private stocked trout pond. Designer furnished. Walking distance to town. Non smokers only; deposit required. $2,500/month negotiable for long term. Weekly rates available. Call 770-639-2682. (9/29)

**COMMERCIAL SPACE ON CAROLINA WAY.** 1200 SF+/-. Currently occupied by Mountain Fitness. Available May 1. $1200/mo. Call Tom Clark (404) 210-7979, (828) 526-4646. (st. 4/14)

**HIGHLANDS GARAGE APARTMENT:** Within town limits. Quiet, cozy, wood panelled. Living room, bedroom, bath, kitchen, balcony, carpeted. One person. No pets. Six month minimum, partially furnished. $425/mo, incl. utilities, except electric. Call 404-892-2090. (st.4/14)

**HOUSE FOR RENT 3BR/2BTH, $650 plus utilities.** No cell phone service. 3459 Buck Creek Road 828-524-6038. (st. 3/3)

**STORAGE/OFFICE LOCATION FOR RENT:** +/- 1,600 sq. ft., heat & air, bathroom, close to town. $700 per month. Call 828-526-8953.

**VACATION RENTALS**

**ON MIRROR LAKE** – Lakeside, canoe & paddleboat, 3 private suites with bath, fireplace, kitchen, w/d. family and pet friendly. Call 828-342-2302. (9/1)

**COZY VACATION RENTAL COTTAGE FOR TWO ON MIRROR LAKE** – fireplace, w/d, kitchen, bath, canoe and paddleboat access. Pet Friendly. Call 828-342-2302. (9/1)

**REAL ESTATE FOR SALE**

**BEAUTIFUL HIGH RIDGE PROPERTY** – facing Scaly Mountain. Located on right fork just past Church of God on Buck Knob Road. 14.91 acres. $299,000. Call Dawn at 813-264-6358. mknowles83@msn.com (8/10)

**MOUNTAIN TOP GOLF LAKE CLUB CASHIERS** – Lot for Sale. Paid $475,000; Will sell for $325,000 with membership included. Call 864-855-2406, or 864-979-6953. (st. 7/27)

**SEE THE ONLY GREEN ROOF, TORNADO PROOF, MODESTLY SIZED VILLA ON THE MARKET.** Lakeside Lodge in Rocky Knob. Appt. Only. www.singleylaydesigns.com or call your broker. (st. 6/30)

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**$103,000! LOWER CLEAR CREEK.** 5.5 miles from Main Street. 2 Lots. .55 & .95 acres. Septics installed. Borders National Forest. 2005/2bed, 2/bath. Very cozy with fabulous view. Call 828-482-2050. (st. 11/11)

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**HANDYMAN SPECIAL** – Repairs and remodelling, electrical and plumbing, carpentry, painting, pressure washing and more. Low prices. Free estimate. Call 828-421-4667. (st. 8/17)

**CRAWLSPACE MOISTURE PROBLEMS?** Musty smell in your home? Call 828-787-1673. (St. 4/28)

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**CABLE SPINET PIANO** in good condition. $600 Call 526-8829 or 342-2279. (st. 8/17)

**DESA #FBST SEE-THRU GAS FIREBOX $200.** Charbroil 8000 grill, needs internal parts, $20. Scott 678-641-1115. (st. 7/21)

**BOULDER TO YOU** – Modest to Massive. Free Highlands Delivery. Installation Available. 828-526-5981. (St. 6/30)

**2 MARBLE END & COFFEE TABLES** $125. 2 contemporary lady statues $100. Tammy 770-337-1000 (Highlands). (st. 6/16)

**ALLEN THEATER ORGAN WITH 3 EXTERNAL SPEAKERS** FREE to interested church or educational facility. 828-526-5402 or 954-444-2010 (cell) (st. 6/16)

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Left: R.E.A.C.H. provides services to the victims and children of domestic violence and sexual assault in Macon County. Over 10% of the families and children served annually are from the Highlands Community. The services provided include emergency shelter, food, clothing, medical accompaniment, individual and group counseling, court advocacy and referrals to additional resources. There are no fees to clients for any services. Mountain Findings is proud to make a donation to R.E.A.C.H. Pictured are Ann Van Harlingen, Executive Director, Cindy Trevathan, Board Vice President, and Mary Lou Fouser (Mountain Findings volunteer)

The Highlands School Booster club supports over 165 school athletes, providing them with uniforms, equipment, camp scholarships, letterman jackets and sweatshirts. Last year they constructed a concession stand for the newly installed regulation soccer field behind the school. The need they have for this year are the funds to purchase picnic tables to be constructed and installed outside the concession stand.

Pictured are Kevin Vinson, Vice President, Jeff Weller, President, and Margorie Crowe, Treasurer.

Donations from Mountain Findings are used by the Hudson Library to purchase books and other reading and viewing items for their collection, costing on an average about $60,000 per year. The volunteers are delighted to continue their support of the library especially with the recently completed expansion. The lovely sign used as a background for the picture is a reminder of how the whole community participates and benefits from the library. Pictured are Sandy Carlton, Board Treasurer, Mary Lu Worley, Head Librarian, Bob Trevathan, Board President and Glenda Bell, Mountain Findings volunteer.