Zoning Board works through variance request

A request for a variance was denied by the Zoning Board of Adjustment Wednesday night but that's not really "news." It's rare a variance is ever granted by the board.

The news is the apparent lack of understanding concerning the workings of the quasi-judicial Zoning Board of Adjustment, whose proceedings and rulings are governed by State mandate and law.

Architect Sam Edgens requested a setback variance from Worley Road in the historic Saucalh area of town. He is building a home for Tate Rich on the site whose existing home is non-conforming because it sits about six feet into the 25-ft. setback from the Worley Road 40-ft. right-of-way.

The existing home, which was likely built before the town's zoning ordinance existed, will be demolished and replaced with a new home for Tate Rich on the site.

We still call him ‘Coach’

By Ryan Potts

I was 16 years old when I met Coach Smart for the first time. The reaction was pretty much what you would expect from an immature kid. There was a lot different about him, but I wasn't exactly in a curious mood. You see, the coach that Smart replaced was a guy I liked, so I wasn't too thrilled about the prospects of playing for a stranger from Louisiana. To be perfectly honest, I thought he talked strange, he looked strange, and his approach to the game was strange. Now, 16 years later, I know that he probably thought worse things about the skinny kid with the glasses than the skinny kid with the glasses thought about him. (I can picture him in my mind saying something like, “What good is a 6'6 kid who can't rebounds and can't play defense?”)

I was never Coach's favorite player, even though I wanted to be. We argued a lot, and I ended up running a lot because of it. To this day we still argue, whether it is about black uniforms or about a 2-1-2 press, we just don't see eye to eye on something. That's just one of many things that haven't changed since that first year that Coach Smart came to Highlands.

He is still as meticulous as ever when it comes to anything basketball. The uniforms are still hung the same, the practice schedules are still made the same, everything is still filed accordingly. (Fun fact: Coach has every practice schedule he has ever made, dating all the way back to his JV coaching job at Dubach in the 1960s.) This type of attention to detail is the type of thing that separates good coaches from great ones and Coach has it in spades.

The attention to detail doesn't just happen off the court, in fact, it is at its highest level on the court.

To hear Coach talk about defense is to be bombarded with specific rules that are in a foreign language to the basketball layman. “Ball below the free throw line, help side man must cross midline.” “Your man sets the screen, off the ball you have to call out the screen and give room for your teammate to go straight up the midline.” These concepts are rarely taught anymore with most high school coaches preferring to sit.

By Ron Keller

President of the Board of the Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic

The Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic began as the dream of a few Cashiers visionaries. Thanks to six years of hard work and support from the people of our community who share the vision, it continues to grow and fulfill its mission of “restoring lives, one tooth at a time.”

The recession has directly impacted everyone, especially the less fortunate Western North Carolina neighbors.

Lucky for the hClinicies in the commitment shared by a dedicated group of nine volunteer dentists. Their professional expertise enables the Clinic to develop complete treatment programs for patients willing to...
I reached for my cell phone as I left the Friday morning Zumba class at the Rec Park. It was 10 o’clock and when I turned the sound back on, I noticed I had missed numerous calls, one after the other, from our daughter Megan who lives in Chicago.

I called her number and she picked up immediately. Her voice was strained and barely audible.

“What’s the matter… are you all right? No,” she said. “Something is really wrong.”

She could barely breathe, had chest pains and she couldn’t move her neck or head.

“Can you come right away?” she asked crying. “Can you come right now?”

I immediately felt helpless. Of course I would go, but getting anywhere fast from Highlands is basically impossible.

“Yes, I’ll come,” I said knowing I’d be lucky to arrive in Chicago at a decent hour to do any good. “Did you call the doctor?”

Yes, she had and was told to go to the Emergency Room.

“Are you coming Mom. Are you coming right away?”

I said yes, again, but told her to go to the emergency room and I would go straight to the hospital when I got to Chicago.

We hung up and I literally ran to the office from the Rec Park and called Jim who was at the dentist with his mother who was getting a root canal in Toccoa, GA, with our only vehicle.

The only flight that could get me to Chicago before midnight was out of Greenville, SC at 5:35 p.m., arriving in Philadelphia at 7:06 p.m., with departure for Chicago at 8:35 and arrival at O’Hare at 9:53 p.m.

There were no non-stop flights that I could catch in time since Jim was still at the dentist and probably wouldn’t get back to Highlands before 2 p.m.

Jim and I kept in contact via cell phone and at 2:15 p.m. he arrived at the office. Once home, I quickly packed and before long we were headed for Greenville.

We got to the Greenville/Spartanburg airport in record time – I was settled at the gate by 4:30 and tried to be patient until 5:35.

I was on the phone with Megan while she gave me a blow-by-blow account of what the doctors were doing with her at the hospital – an EKG, a CAT scan, blood work, and finally spinal taps — a few of them, which were horrendous. Four residents tried their hands at a spinal tap to no avail. Finally, the anesthesiologist was

About agendas ...

Dear Editor,

In reference to the on-going discussion as to what form of government the town of Highlands should have, I have to admire the tenacity of the progressives for their artificial extension of this debate. I thought we had already settled the issue through public hearings, public opinion and public preference. But, like the issue of affordable housing a.k.a. public housing a.k.a. multi-family housing a.k.a. work-force housing, the progressives are like pit bulls and won’t let go of their determination to take this town in the direction they want, regardless of what the majority of residents want. Is this not a typical example of how democracy in this country has evolved, i.e. our elected representatives not representing their electorate, but instead implementing their own agenda, devil may care?

And don’t even get me started on the recent discussions/proposals to create a new Zoning category, i.e. Conditional District Zoning. (Thanks, again, to our town’s great and irrefusable benefactor, O.E.I.). But I would advise anyone considering buying property or a new home in Highlands to make sure they have plenty of land around them as buffer between them and our fickle and capricious zoning czars.

These comments are submitted with all due respect:

Alice Nelson
Highlands

... NEEDY continued from page 1

maintain a regular dental hygiene lifestyle. They are supported by a highly motivated staff that manages the complexities of working with these distinctively different professionals.

The daily operation of the Clinic is one of continued staff education and development mixed with the appropriate amount of patience, persistence, and perspiration. As a result, the Clinic has received recognition from the North Carolina Dental Society, the NC Association of Free Clinics, and other civic organizations.

Many free clinics in North Carolina have been forced to curtail services because they rely on a single source of funding, whether from federal or state grants or from one large institution. Under the very capable leadership of Lynne Keating, our Chairperson for grant writing, the Clinic has expanded its source of funds beyond its original core.

As a result, a growing percentage of our annual contributions come from foundations and corporations outside the local community, but don’t misunderstand that statement. The reality is that all of us have been impacted by the financial problems that the country is facing. Both individuals and institutional donors have reduced their contributions to not-for-profits. Your continued support, combined with external contributions, has allowed us to continue funding an in
1st Lt. and Mrs. Zachary Woodcox

Zachary Cole Woodcox and Tara Luann Fletcher were married December 11, 2011. Tara is the daughter of Jeff and Missy Fletcher of Minerva, Ohio and Michelle and Jared Williams of Las Vegas, Nevada.

Zack is the son of Jan and Gus Lard of Highlands and Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Steve Stewart, of Minerva, Ohio, childhood friend of the bride, was pastor in the ceremony held at the protestant chapel in Camp Lejeune, NC.

Zack, a 1st Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps, is a 2004 graduate of Highlands School and 2008 graduate of University of Colorado at Boulder. Tara is a self-employed hair stylist. The couple will make their home where the Marines send them, currently in Camp Lejeune, NC.

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CHESTNUT HILL is located at 64 Clubhouse Trail. Turn on Buck Creek Road and proceed to Clubhouse Trail. Visit us at www.ChestnutHillAtHighlands.com
There are many reasons why the Muslims call Americans Infidels but one of the main reasons is in the title of this column. Maybe this will help you better understand why there is an open hatred for us...and I'm not talking about the crazies who want to blow up the entire West; I'm referring to the average Muslim, some are friends of mine, who are raising children, attending daily prayers and making a living in the world. Why is there such disdain for us?

Devote Muslims who pray on their hands and knees five times a day are sickened by Americans who curse their God. We do it all the time, usually in place of four-letter curse words. But the meaning is the same. Muslims are aware that Christians accept Jesus Christ as the son of God...so the term “Oh, for Christ's sake” said in a form of disgust, is blasphemy in the minds of Muslims. They wonder why we would curse our Savior. They see us as hypocrates who pray on Sunday and curse Jesus Christ the rest of the week. We are Infidels.

Muslims complain that Americans use the term “Jesus Christ” in a profane way. And where did the term “Jesus H. Christ” come from? It’s sickening. Are you getting my point? And did you know that Muslims respect Jesus Christ, not as God’s son, but as a great prophet sent by Allah? Muslims would never curse a prophet sent by Allah, mostly because it would displease their god. Muslims also honor the Blessed Mary because she is accepted as the mother of a great prophet sent by Allah. Muslims bestow more honor to the Blessed Mary than some American Protestant religions. I’m ashamed of that fact.

In most of the Middle East, showing disrespect for Allah can result in instant death. They place their God on such a high pedestal and show so much respect that they bow down on their hands and knees in his honor five times a day.

Americans play Bingo and cook fried chicken. In the eyes of Muslims, Bingo is gambling and forbidden by Allah. While some Christians are running around using slang words like “Jesus Christ” as a cure phrase, and “Oh, for Christ’s sake” or the worse, “God Damn” Muslims use slang words that, in translation, mean, “God willing” and “Praise be Allah.” These slang phrases are used at the beginning or end of most of their sentences.

Several years ago, the little missus and I hired a private tour guide to take us around Cairo, Egypt. While standing at the base of the pyramids, the guide told us he would have to excuse himself for 10 minutes for afternoon prayer. He didn’t ask for permission or wonder whether we approved...or how it might affect his gratuity. He didn’t care. So, in front of us and all the other tourists, people from all over the world, he laid out a small mat, dropped to his knees and bowed in prayer. He did it two other times during the tour. I was impressed.

President Obama recently said we are no longer a Christian nation and I think...
We really rely on electricity, so much so that every time it goes out, I wonder why we don’t have a generator. The answer is obvious. When the power is on, which is the vast majority of the time, we don’t need one.

We had a generator guy come by a few years ago. We wanted him to survey our needs, recommend the appropriate unit, and give us a price. As I recall, he was a charming guy. We chatted. We offered him a beer, which he accepted. He suggested two or three different units depending on whether we wanted to be comfortable or barely survive. He said it would cost about $20,000 to be reasonably cozy. He sipped his beer and added that we’d need to bring a bigger propane tank, oh, and we would need an electrician, neither of which was included in the $20,000 quote. That’s the other reason we don’t have a generator.

I don’t really mind, as long as it isn’t too cold. We’ve slept together in front of the fireplace on cold nights. The power has never been off long enough to need to drain the pipes. The electricity is off tonight. I’m limited by battery life. I don’t know whether the computer’s battery of the flashlight will give out first. If I’d taken typing class more seriously, I wouldn’t need a light.

We’re leaving for the airport at six AM and we haven’t finished packing, as a matter of fact, haven’t started. We do know where all the flashlights and oil lamps are.

Come to think of it, we did order a generator once. The company offered a 50% reduction in the purchase price, which was about one quarter of the drunk’s price. We paid in advance, and waited. Apparently the company, which had been having trouble giving generators away before several devastating hurricanes struck the US mainland in a single season, could suddenly sell all that it could make, as a matter of fact, haven’t started. We do know where all the flashlights and oil lamps are.

I promised I wouldn’t write a Christmas theme column this week, but I can’t resist a greeting to all our readers: “Merry Christmas and keep the lights on.”
The spreading chestnut tree

“The history of the true mountain man will soon be lost forever. We don’t know why our ancestors settled in the rugged mountains of Western North Carolina, but I am sure they had a reason.

The young people of today who grew up in the mountains don’t have the slightest idea as to what the true life of a mountaineer was because they were born into the jet age and our nation has changed so much in the last 50 years. I write the following parts of “Back Days in Highlands” so a record of that time can be kept.”

– Herm Wilson

(Published with permission from his son Neville Wilson)

The chestnut tree was the most valuable tree that ever grew in the mountains of Western North Carolina. It had so many uses. It was used for making beautiful lumber. The chestnut tree would grow thousands of burrs. In those burrs would be three brown chestnuts. The burr would open about the last of October or the first of November. When the wind would blow the chestnuts would fall to the ground. Animals of all kinds love chestnuts, as did we.

Before the blight struck the chestnut, my brother and I would take along a feed sack and head out to the mountains. Sometimes we would pick up a bushel before coming home. Chestnuts were good baked or boiled or eaten just as they fell from the tree. The young people of today who grew up in the mountains don’t remember that chestnuts were good baked or boiled or eaten just as they fell from the tree. Animals of all kinds love chestnuts, as did we.

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The open range

We ranged our milk cows in the mountains. They would stray a long way from home, but they wore large bells that we could hear a mile away. The cows were to be hunted in the evening and brought home to be milked.

The thing we dreaded was to be caught out in a thunder storm. The rattlesnakes were more plentiful back then than they are now but luckily the trails were plain and we never got lost.

Hogs were much different from cows. The hog was stubborn and wanted to go his way. The sheep were so easy to toll or drive; they hardly ever gave any trouble, just followed along behind. They only liked to range on the highest mountains. I have wondered what they did for water but somehow, somewhere, they found it.

People had a mark that was on the ear of their livestock. I remember ours – it was a small v-shaped slit in the left ear. The mark was registered in the courthouse so no one could claim your animals. Sometimes our animals would stray up to Highlands. Then the police would put them up some place and charge us 50 cents a head before releasing them to us.

– Herman “Herm” Wilson was one of the six men whose contributions to the Town of Highlands were featured in the Highlands Historical Society’s production of “Highlands Live!” in June 2011. Interest in him led his son Neville and daughter-in-law Kathleen to share some of Herm’s writings that reflect the man’s homespun humor, philosophy and patriotism.
The Highlands School basketball teams hosted fellow Macon County school Franklin last Saturday in a non-conference matchup. The Lady Highlanders were faced with the task of slowing 2,000 point scorer Lindsay Simpson and a high powered Franklin offense. The Highlanders came out in a 2-2-1 press that slowed the Lady Panther break, and were able to control the tempo of the game for much of the first half despite trailing by only 6 at the half. In the second half, the Lady Panthers used their size in the paint to wear down the smaller Lady Highlanders, and by the fourth quarter the Lady Panther lead had ballooned to 12. The Lady Panthers continued to push Highlands inside, and Simpson was able to pad her scoring in the fourth quarter to finish with 21. Emily Munger led the Lady Highlanders with 15 points in the 68-42 loss.

The Highlanders were faced with an equally daunting task, as the Franklin Panthers came in sporting one of the largest front lines in recent memory. Led by the 6’10 Anthony Capaforte, the Panthers also had players of 6’6, 6’5 and 6’4 in their rotation, which would prove difficult to handle for a Highlander team that has just two players over 6’ tall. Highlands came out strong early, controlling the pace of the game and using their speed to befuddle the Panthers on the offensive end. Despite leading for most of the first quarter, the final minute of the first quarter saw a couple of missed layups for Highlands turn into a Jeb Brewer 3 pointer and a Capaforte basket to give the Panthers a 15-10 lead at the end of one. The first quarter was the end of the offensive highlights for Highlands, as they were unable to hit outside shots and pull the larger Panthers away from the basket. On the defensive end, the Panthers pounded the ball inside with regularity and slowly pulled away for a 61-30 victory.

The Highlanders and Lady Highlanders will resume play on January 3rd when they face Nantahala.

... COACH continued from page 1

Even though many things have remained the same, age changes all of us in one way or another. What used to be 32 minutes of hell (straight running and conditioning) before every practice has now turned into 32 minutes of basketball work during practice. Coach used to have a temper…I may or may not have witnessed a clipboard or two being broken or a bottle of Gold Bond powder exploding against a wall! But that temper has given way to an internal fire. This fire still burns in him, no matter how quiet it is at times. I can particularly see it when we give up a driving layup or we fail to block off on defense. He no longer yells at the referees, and rarely yells at players – and yet they both still listen when he speaks. Why do they listen? They listen because Coach promises all of his players that they will never outwork him, and for the most part he has been right. In addition to thousands of basketball practices, games and functions, Coach has been to countless weddings, helped hundreds of former players find jobs, and given thousands of references. Oh yeah, he has also found time during his busy schedule to coach other sports, to have a family, and to battle cancer successfully for 10 years. His coaching career has been a testament to doing things the right way, and the power of loyalty between a coach, his players and the community. It is only fitting that he reached a milestone like 700-and I am extremely proud that he did it as a Highlander.
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See RE TRANSACTIONS page 12
called. She moved three vertebrae up and
did the tap in a second.

The back story.

Megan is working as a nanny while
pursuing her acting career and training in
Chicago at Improv Olympics. Monday and
Tuesday that week the two little girls she
takes care of came down with fevers com-
bined with projectile vomiting of which
Megan was a recipient.

She brushed off the experience say-
ing how pitiful the girls were, and recount-
ed her appearance when they finished
vomiting on her. By 9:30 p.m. Tuesday
night, she was having acutediarhea and
projectile vomiting that continued non-
stop until 5:30 a.m. Wednesday.

She called me at 5:30 to say she was
on her way to the hospital, something her
doctor said she should have done four
hours into vomiting instead of eight hours
into it, as she was severely dehydrated and
had acute pains in her abdomen.

She got home from the hospital early
Wednesday evening after having blood
work, tests run on her organs, and lying in
the emergency room attached to a saline/
morphine drip for eight hours. The doc-
tors told her to stay hydrated and to take

… ANGELS continued

from page 2

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**Reduced to $499,000!**

3 BED, 2 BATH HOME WITH 2-CAR GARAGE, OFFICE, WALK-OUT BASEMENT IN PRIVATE GATED COMMUNITY THAT SURROUNDS A 17-ACRE LAKE. Was listed for $549,000. Now 499,000. Call Andrea Gabbard Owner/Broker with Highlands Mountain Realty 828-526-4858 for information.

**Clear Spring, Highlands.** REDUCED! Sweet cottage w/beautiful Blue Valley views, 2 BR/2 BA, screened porch, just minutes to town, $269,000. Contact Ali McClure Moody (828) 508-3576.

**Highlands Country Club.** Cottage on 1.11 acres on the 13th fairway. Priced right so you can turn this cottage into a showplace, $565,000. Contact Ali McClure Moody (828) 508-3576.

**Quintessential Mountain Get-Away.** 3BR/3BA w/cathedral ceilings, wood floors & custom treatments throughout, 2 stone fireplaces & screened porch. $775,000. 20 Village Walk, Highlands. Contact Mal Phillips at (828) 200-2642.

**Understated, In-town Mountain Elegance.** Untouched, pristine, gently sloping acreage; ridge view probable. Purchase entire legacy parcel for $898,000 or one of two 4+ acre, estate-sized lots for $485,000. Contact Mal Phillips at (828) 200-2642.

**Stunning Commercial Building.** Soaring ceilings, light & bright, hardwood floors throughout, gas log FP & situated on a gorgeous lot w/rushing stream. Outstanding visibility from the highway on the ATL side of town. $625,000. Contact Ali McClure Moody (828) 508-3576.

**Pat Allen, Owner**

**Pat Allen Realty Group**

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**2011 Highlands Real Estate Statistics**

As 2011 is coming to an end, I thought many of you would be interested in how Highlands fared in the marketplace. So here is a review of sales year-to-date.

We have heard that location, location, location is what matters in real estate. For homebuyers and sellers the newly revised national data has little impact because only very localized data matters to consumers making decisions. Local Realtor experts can provide you with pertinent information that effects them as potential buyers and sellers.

National data is important for policy makers to measure the broad strengths and weaknesses of the housing market as they impact the national economy. The only thing significant to consumers is outlooks on data from their local area confines. My statistics are for Highlands only and through December 16, 2011.

- **Total Homes sold:** 96, List-to-sale ratio was 85%
- **Up to $399,000 - 32 sales, 10 were bank-owned.** Average days on the market 254. From $400,000-$699,000 - 29 sales, 7 bank-owned. Average days on market 370. From $700,000-$999,000 - 17 sales, 3 bank-owned. Average days on market 413. From $1,000,000-$2,000,000 - 16 sales, 1 bank-owned. Average days on market 503.
- **69 Buyers paid cash**
- **Total Lots/Land sold:** 14 Range was from $45,000-$1,650,000. Four were bank-owned. Average days on market, 414. Total Commercial Properties: 4. One was bank-owned. Total Condominiums sold: 21. Up to $299,000 - 11 sales From $300,000-$1,350,000. Two were bank-owned.

You can reach Pat Allen at 828-200-9179, 828-526-8784 or by email at pat.allen@gmail.com or visit her website at patallenrealtygroup.com.
Think Christmas from Highlands!

Merry Christmas!

ALL MERCHANDISE ON SALE!

Jeans:
Joe's, Hudson, Citizens, Seven, AG
$20-$75 OFF

Michael Stars:
$10 off

Free People: 20-75% off

Coats: (including BB Dakota & Tulle)
starting at $29

Shoes: starting at $19

Boots: starting at $29!

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Coats: (including BB Dakota & Tulle)
starting at $29

Shoes: starting at $19

Boots: starting at $29!

355 Main Street (in The Galax Theatre)
526-4660

Mens & Women's Lucky Brand Jeans & Tops
30% Off

XTREME THREADS

338 Main St. 526-4777

Holiday Sale!

Mens' & Women's
30-50% off Select Items!
PLUS!
75% OFF Select Ticketed Items!

BEAR MOUNTAIN OUTFITTERS

CLARINS - EARTH - CHACO - FIT FLOP - KÜHL - PRANA

CROCS - GRAMICCI - HURLBUT - MINNETONKA - AVENTURA - CAMELBAK - LOLÉ - TEVA

MEN - WOMEN - KIDS
CASUAL CLOTHING - ACTIVE WEAR
ACCESSORIES - BACKPACKS
HUNDREDS OF SANDAL, SHOE AND BOOT STYLES

"We Outfit You for Life"
Mon-Thur 10-5, Fri Sat 10-6, Sun 11-5 828-526-5784
Corner of Main and 3rd St. Highlands, N.C. Open Year Round; bearmountainoutfitters@da.net

MOUNTAIMSMITH - AETREX - BORN - TOMS - TIMBERLAND - SMARTWOOL - WOOLYCHIC - JAMBU

sperry • vibram five fingers • softspots • marmot

... ANGELS from page 9

the pain medication they prescribed as needed.

Thursday morning she awoke feeling worlds better noticing only a pain in her neck that she brushed off because compared to Wednesday she felt like a million bucks.

But Friday morning dawned with acute pain in her head and neck.

Back to the airport.

Soon after I was settled at the gate, they announced that the flight to Philadelphia was delayed an hour. We would take off at 6:35 rather than 5:35. The layover was supposed to be an hour and half in Philadelphia anyway, so I figured everything would be OK. I'd have 30 minutes to catch the connection. To be sure I asked an attendant: She looked up the flight as well as the configuration of the Philadelphia airport and said, "I'm not going to lie to you, you will have to hi-tail it because your flight comes into the A terminal and the connecting flight leaves from the C terminal. You'll have to take a bus to get there."

Now I'm nervous.

I'm one of the first to board the flight to Philadelphia at 6:35 p.m. I packed only a carry-on bag so I could save time, but as I'm about to walk into the cabin, an attendant says I have to leave my bag; it will be stowed in the plane and I can pick it up on the way out.

This was a first for me. What's the point of a carry-on? Soon 40 carry-ons joined mine at the door of the plane.

The plane was packed. Over the course of the flight to Philly, the guy sitting next to me, who regularly flies from Greenville, to Philadelphia and on to Albany, NY, told me first, to never rely on a connecting flight in or out of Philadelphia if time matters because weather problems always screw up flights. He also told me in a very tender, soothing way (my frayed nerves were showing) that it would probably be really hard for me to do make the connection at this point. I started to freak out a little, I mean my baby needed me!

He offered to take my flight information and talk to the attendant in the terminal on his the way to his connection and would urge her to ask them to hold my plane for me. He thought it would work, but as we left the vestibule of the plane we saw the carry-ons weren't there yet and people waiting for their carry-ons began to pile up. He shot me a worried look and took off running.

As we waited for our carry-ons to appear, the co-pilot entered the tunnel from the plane. I asked if she could call ahead and ask that they hold the plane to Chicago. I explained that my daughter was in the hospital and I was trying to get to her. First she said I could ask the attendant in the terminal but then stopped and said "I'll call for you."

She disappeared into the plane. She emerged a few minutes later just as an attendant opened the door to retrieve the carry-ons. "I called but I can't promise any...

• See ANGELS page 17
## REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS FOR 2011

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**Join us as we Celebrate the Birth of Our Savior at Highlands United Methodist Church**

**Christmas Eve Services:**

- 5 pm
  - Family-Friendly Candlelight Service
- 7 - 8 pm
  - Drop-in Communion
- 11 pm
  - Candlelight Service

**Christmas Day**

- Sunday, December 25th
- 10:30 am
- Join us for an informal worship service

315 Main Street · 526-3376
Pastors: Beth Bowser
Paul Christy
... VARIANCE continued from page 1

another which will include an attached pavilion. It's the pavilion for which the variance was requested because as designed, it will sit about six feet into the setback, like the old house, though on a different part of the lot.

If Edgens was building the new home on the same foundation of the existing home, then a setback would likely be allowed. But since the existing home will be demolished and the new home and pavilion arranged differently on the lot, everything built on the lot must be in compliance.

““If you move off the existing foundation it’s a new story,” said Zoning/Planning Director David Clabo. “If you used the existing foundation, it would be OK.”

Edgens argued that building the house in the setback, i.e., close to the road, is in character with the rest of the homes on Worley Road — in fact, making him comply with the zoning ordinance and setback regulations would mean the new home isn’t in character with the rest of the neighborhood, he said.

Under oath he admitted that he could shift the pavilion back from the road, but the foundation requirements would cost his client more money. Furthermore, he said he knew about the setback requirements from the start but chose to design the house in the setback anyway.

He suggested the Zoning Board change the ordinance to allow all construction of new homes in the Satulah, Mirror Lake and Highlands Country Club areas to be built close to the road, in the setback if needed, to maintain the character of those neighborhoods.

“It speaks to the charm and uniqueness of those neighborhoods,” he said. “The purpose of the zoning ordinance should be to maintain consistency in neighborhoods.”

Steve Chenoweth, who with John Underwood was appointed to the Zoning Board Wednesday night and then elected Chairman and Vice Chairman, respectively, explained that the Zoning Board didn’t set policy but could only carry out the letter of the law. He said requests to change ordinances should be presented to the Town Board.

“You said the pavilion can be built in compliance by moving it, so it’s hard to grant a variance if you can make it work,” said Chenoweth.

Not only would it be “hard” to grant a variance, it would be illegal as per the zoning board’s required “findings of facts.”

The “facts” are determined via the following criteria:

1. A variance can be granted if there are practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships in the way of carrying out the strict letter of the ordinance. To determine if there are practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships, five conditions must exist.
   a. By complying with the ordinance, the applicant can’t secure a reasonable return from or make reasonable use of the property. Merely proving that the variance would permit a greater profit can’t be considered a hardship.
   b. The hardship results from the application of the ordinance to the property rather than from other factors such as deed restrictions.
   c. The hardship is due to the physical nature of the applicant’s property, such as size, shape, or topography, which is different from that of neighboring property.
   d. The hardship is not the result of the actions of the applicant who knowingly or unknowingly violates the ordinance or purchases the property after the effective date of the ordinance and then comes to the board for relief.
   e. The hardship is peculiar to the applicant’s property, rather than the result of conditions that are widespread. If other properties are equally subject to the hardship created by the ordinance, then granting the variance would be a special privilege denied to others and wouldn’t promote equal justice.

2. If granted, the variance would be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the ordinance and preserves the spirit of the ordinance.

3. If granted, the variance would assure public safety and welfare and that substantial justice was done.

As Highlands’ has evolved, setbacks and road width requirements were put into the town’s ordinance to enable service and emergency vehicle easy access to neighborhoods and to enable proper construction of infrastructure — which speaks to the public safety and welfare issue.

Vice Chairman Underwood said the fact that the plan can be pulled back, shows that a variance isn’t needed. “So we can’t grant it,” he said.

Member Charlie Dasher said he was dismayed that the Zoning Board has no discretion in cases. “I don’t know why we don’t just play a tape recording of the requirements,” he said.

Except where laws, ordinances and mandates apply, it’s possible for opinions, emotions, politics, and affiliations to affect decisions of the Town Board, Planning Board and Appearance Commission, but the Zoning Board of Adjustment has to go by the findings of fact.

Michael Rogers, who moved up from an alternate to regular member this month, said he knew Edgens, was familiar with his quality of work, and felt the variance should be granted for the reasons Edgens stated.

Rogers and Dasher voted “no” to the motion to deny the variance which passed 3-2 even though Jack Peay, Underwood and Chenoweth agreed that Edgens’ work was good and the house, pavilion and view would be spectacular.

And concerning the variance:

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— Kim Lewicki

Think Christmas from Highlands ...on the hill!

‘Tis the Season at

212 S. 4th Street, Highlands 526-3687

4th St. Boutique

50%-75% Off Storewide Holiday Sale!

Comfortable Clothing for Women
Owner Linda Bubenick, formerly of Village Boutique
526-8878
219 S. 4th St. ...on the hill

SALE!!

Martha Anne’s
...on the hill

New Merchandise New Discounts!

S. 4th Street 526-4473

... NEEDY continued from page 2

Creased patient load with a higher level of service.

Our fundraising success has also enabled us to increase our endowment. This capital provides assurance that additional services can be considered even when traditional funding sources are expected to produce less in annual contributions. The first gala would be incomplete without a tooth fairy. That fairy turned out to be me, complete with a pink tutu and gossamer wings. Please remember those in need; teeth are often neglected. Every bit of help from the citizens of Highlands and Cashiers is appreciated. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!
Maman takes Manhattan, Part 2

Michelle Mead-Armor
michiemead@aol.com

W hen someone comes to stay at your place, it's important to make the sleeping arrangements clear from the very beginning. This is especially important if you live in a studio apartment. When Maman arrived to spend Christmas 1999 and New Year's with me, it was very obvious that two people sleeping in the same small apartment was going to require some creative thinking. My original idea had been to purchase a single-size Aerobed. With a coupon from Bed, Bath & Beyond, the cost was less than one night in a Manhattan hotel. Maman and I would take turns, one of us sleeping on the floor, minus the cute.

Since I was the hostess, I thought it only diplomatic to take the first shift on the Aerobed. Even the people who love me agree that I am not a graceful person. You know those wonderful National Geographic documentaries which feature baby animals? The newborn shakes its little head, blinks, and then tries to rise on wobbly, uncertain legs—generally slipping and falling several times in the process. Unfortunately, this also mesleeping on the floor, minus the cute.

That first night, Maman and I finished dinner, I washed the dishes, and we watched a Christmas special on TV. Since I had a full day at the office the next morning, we had an early night. Teeth brushed and in our nightgowns, Maman jumped into bed, and I retired to the hall entrance, where I proceeded to blow up the Aerobed. There was just enough room for it to fit between the entrance to the kitchen and the front closet. I lowered myself to the ground, holding on for dear life to a door handle. Fortunately for me, the moment was not captured on film.

Once settled in our respective beds, Maman and I exchanged a hearty “bonsoir!”, and drifted off to sleep. During the night, I occasionally heard the elevator just outside my door, and the gentle snoring of Maman, but I drifted back to sleep.

During the night, I occasionally heard the elevator just exchanged a hearty “bonsoir!”, and drifted off to sleep.
In October I had my annual physical, something we all should do. I went into the doctor’s office was examined and given an ok. Next, I went over to the hospital lab. Even though I am young, as a precaution, I have a thorough panel of lab work done to make sure I am truly healthy. While sitting in the lab waiting to be stuck with a needle, I thought about the lab results from the previous year. They were good. My blood sugar was good, my cholesterol was good and all of the other markers such as calcium levels, sodium levels, etc. were good! I wondered why I was going through all of this again, only one year later. Then I thought about the past year:

Over the past year I have been exercising at a higher intensity than ever before. I have been training to gain strength, mobility and speed for my hobby of running in obstacle course races. To train at a higher intensity, I have needed to consume more calories, which can be difficult. Somehow consuming more calories had resulted in eating an unhealthy diet. Even though I have been eating healthier than a large portion of our country, I have not been eating as healthy as I should. I have been eating too many sweets, very large meals, too many nutritional supplements and not diversifying the vegetables in my diet.

I waited for the results of my blood work for a week and a half. Life went on as usual but in the back of my head I was worried about my results. I wondered why I had been eating so unhealthy, especially in the name of training for a healthy hobby. I finally came to the conclusion that I had been focusing too much on competing with other people and comparing myself to those I was competing against. I realized that somewhere in the middle physically comparing myself to other people and wanting to take in more calories to train at a higher intensity, I lost focus on the more important goal of overall health. Over the past year I should have been worrying about blood sugar and cholesterol levels instead of winning a medal in a race. Luckily, my results came back very good… I dodged a bullet.

So, what about you? What is driving your health goals? Are you trying to lose weight or gain weight to compare yourself with others? Do you spend hours in the gym to have a perfect body? Losing weight and exercise is something many of us need to do, but are you doing it for the right reasons? Are you engaging in healthy behaviors to live a longer life or better life? Maybe as a society, instead of comparing athletic ability, strength or physical attractiveness we should be comparing the results of our annual health screenings and blood panel results. Maybe in 2012, Highlands should give out a medal to the person with the most optimal blood pressure reading or best cholesterol readings!
it was comforting, not annoying. I woke up the next morning surprisingly rested, just seconds before the alarm was set to go off. Maman was already awake. When I asked her how she'd slept, she replied that it was the first good night’s sleep she’d had since Daddy died. In that very instant, I realized two truths. The first was that I could actually make my mother happy. The second was that I was going to get the Aerobed for the whole two weeks.

Having my usual shower and breakfast was a little tricky with company in such a small space, but we managed it. I ran the five blocks to work, and arrived, flushed but cheerful. Everyone in the office knew Maman was staying with me, and they were looking forward to meeting her. It was fun introducing her to my colleagues, my boss Alex Kohnert, and his boss, Berthold von Stuelnagel. I was particularly eager for my mother to meet Bert, whose relative was one of the Germans who refused Hitler’s order to destroy Paris. That, and his involvement in the plot to kill Hitler cost him his life. Bert and my mother hit it off immediately. He had spent part of his childhood in Paris, and still spoke excellent French.

My office was located in Midtown Manhattan, in a perfect spot to grab a quick lunch. Au Bon Pain was good for soups, salads, and sandwiches. There were also several cheap and cheerful Chinese restaurants available. A downstairs food cart run by a charming Greek gentleman offered some of the best hot dogs in town, and he was so taken with my mother that he kissed her hand and would never let her pay. With only an hour for lunch, we usually did our shopping expeditions after work. While I’m not much of a shopper, I still knew a few great places, including

... ANGELS continued from page 11

Chicago; that my daughter’s in the hospital.
 thing,” she said. The attendant who was stacking up the bags said she had already been asked to call for me, but it was no use. I would just have to take a flight out the next day because there were no more planes to Chicago and they probably wouldn’t hold the flight for me.

I don’t know what my face looked like at that point, but the co-pilot chimed in and said there was a chance.

My bag was the LAST one out of the belly of the plane, because it was the first one in. Duh!

People parted for me as I ran through the tunnel to the terminal. I was at gate A-1. I was told to catch the bus at gate A-11. It was a long way off.

As I raced down the terminal pulling my carry-on behind me, I passed the co-pilot. “Do you know where to go?” she asked. “Not really,” I yelled still running. “It’s gate A-14 to the right.” I thanked her but thought, “Great, it’s even further than I thought.”

I got to A-14. The bus had just left. About five minutes later another one pulled up and I dangled in. It took about 5 minutes to get to terminal C. I ran up the escalator, my carry-on dunking behind me. At the top I see I’m at gate C-1.

The flight to Chicago leaves from gate C-35. There’s no way I’m going to make it.

I see three golf carts with drivers calmly shooting the breeze as people scurry around them.

I race over and ask if someone will drive me to gate C-35. I tell them it’s an emergency, that I can’t miss the flight to

one which offered discount Estée Lauder products, my mother’s favorites. When my mother dies, she wants to be cremated, and her ashes scattered in the Petites section of Talbots. With two Talbot shops nearby, my mother was in her element.

Let me tell you a little about the weather in New York. Manhattan is a sliver of land between the Hudson River, and the East River – which is not really a river, but a tidal strait. When the wind blows across either body of water, and across the cross streets, it can be bone chilling. The only solution is layers and layers of clothing, especially snuggly hats, long wooly scarves, and boots that can handle the slickest ice and the deepest slush. New Yorkers don’t let the winter faze them, but you go outside at your peril if you aren’t bundled up.

Maman had a list of places she’d always wanted to visit. The first was the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center. We bundled up against the cold, and with a healthy respect for pickpockets, we left our money at home. A short walk from...
### Real Estate Transactions for 2011

**Jan. 1, 2011 to Dec. 16, 2011**

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... JUST HERS continued from page 17

my apartment, Rockefeller Center is always a joy at Christmas. The animated windows of Bloomingdale’s are already getting you in a holiday mood. Then, we went down a decorated alley of illuminated angels blowing their trumpets. The tree was huge, brightly lit, and towered over the skating rink filled with locals and tourists alike. Everyone wants their picture taken, but you have to be careful who you hand your camera over to. People with their families are the best bet. Maman and I gave our camera to a helpful father, whose wife watches their children as he graciously takes a few photos of us underneath the tree. Then, we do the same for them, parting with smiles and “Merry Christmas” ringing in our ears.

Then, it’s off to St. Patrick’s Cathedral, which is all decked out in bright poinsettias and glowing with hundreds of flickering candles. The Cathedral is packed, and since service is going on, we do our best to keep a respectful silence, while chatty tourists are shushed by the faithful. Maman and I have visited a lot of churches together, but St. Patrick’s at Christmas is really something special.

Back at the office the next day, Y2K is the topic of conversation. We haven’t even made it through Christmas, and we’re already talking about New Year’s Eve. Our computers may crash at midnight, and send us back to the Dark Ages, but we are New Yorkers. We are going to usher in the New Year with style. Bored and a little annoyed with all the bragging and bravado, I realize I haven’t planned, nothing to add to the conversation. When someone finally asks me what we’re doing for New Year’s Eve, I think of the first thing that comes to mind. “I’m going to moon,” I reply, with great determination. Wait ’til I tell Maman.

- Michelle is a writer and translator who moved to Highlands after years of living in Baltimore, Sydney, Paris and New York. She lives in town with her two very spoiled cats, Orion and Weasel. Michelle and the cats wish all of you a very Merry Christmas, whether you are spending the holiday with family, friends, beloved pets, or by yourself.
Road work begin at HUMC site off Church Street

The two-way road linking Church Street Alley and Spring Street is now under construction. It marks the first step of the Highlands United Methodist Church expansion. Funds are needed to complete the project which will include a new fellowship hall and education center.

Photo by Jim Lewicki

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Tate fills position on MC Board of Commissioners

Macon County Clerk of Court, Vic Perry, swore James Tate into office at the Tuesday, Dec. 13 at the Macon County Commission meeting. Tate was elected by the Macon County GOP to take the place of Commissioner Brian McClellan who resigned his position. Tate will hold the position until the first meeting in December 2012. The November 2012 elections will determine who will finish out McClellan’s term. Also pictured is Tate’s wife Alison Tate.

Photo by Kim Lewicki

The Bascom’s 2011 Gingerbread House winners

On December 10, The Bascom announced the winners of the 2011 Gingerbread House Workshop Contest. The first place entry, created by Victoria Gentry, age 6, is pictured. Freda Olalde, age 9, received second place honors. The Bascom is now open year-round, Mon. through Sat., 10 am to 5 pm and Sun., 12 noon to 5 pm. Enjoy workshops, exhibitions, special events and quality programs throughout the year at The Bascom. For more information, to register for Bascom workshop offerings or for more details on all Bascom activities, visit www.TheBascom.org.

Greenway Trail work continues

The Greenway work crew built the Ilges Trail connecting Lower Lake Road with Big Bear Pen Road on Saturday, December 17th. Pictured are Jack Bornemann, Hillrie Quin; Ricky Siegel, Marsha Smalo, Cindy Rodinsky; John Akridge, Rachel Friday, Joe Mangum, Edwin Poole and Drew Weigner. (Not shown) are Heather Mangum, Richard Melvin and Ran Shaffner.

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