

Highlands' Newspaper

FREE every Wednesday

Volume 9, Number 49

Internet PDF Version at www.HighlandsNewspaperPDF.com

Wednesday, Dec. 7, 2011

Thursday, Dec. 8

• A Special Town Board meeting at 7 p.m. in the Community Building to discuss the Town Manager-Council form of government with representatives from the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Government.

Sat. Dec. 10

• Breakfast with Santa at the Highlands United Methodist Church at 8:30 a.m., \$10 per family. Call 526-3376 for more information.

• At The Bascom -- Hot Chocolate Events. View exhibitions and Holiday Storytelling. Call 526-4949.

• Photos with Santa at the Visitor Center 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

• Live Band at ElAzteca Mexican Restaurant in Highlroads Plaza. Drink specials all night long!

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a strenuous 12-mile hike, with elevation change of 2,000 ft., to the summit of Standing Indian Mountain. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin (across from Burger King) at 9 a.m. Drive 30 miles round trip. Bring lunch and plenty of water. Call leader Don O'Neal, 828-586-5723. Able visitors welcome, but no pet.

Sat. & Sun., Dec 10-11

• Community Christmas Chorale 5 p.m. at the Highlands United Methodist Church.

Sunday, Dec. 11

• The Mountaintop Ringers will play during the 10:50 worship service at the Highlands United Methodist Church on Main Street.

Tuesday, Dec. 13

• Story Swap on Tuesday at 7:30 pm, at the Ugly Dog Pub at 294 S. Fourth St. in Highlands. The theme for December is "Anything Holiday." If you have a 5-7 minute story to tell or read, sign up at the pub or call 369-1927.

Wed., Dec. 14

• Pancake Supper Highlands Boys Basketball Team fundraiser before the PTO meeting and band concert, 5:15 - 6:45 p.m. Pancakes, juice and fruit \$5 for 2 pancakes or \$7 for all you can eat.

Tate to replace McClellan on MC Board

The Macon County Republican Party Executive Committee held a special meeting at the Macon County Courthouse Monday, Dec. 5 to select an interim Republican to fill the vacancy left by Commissioner Brian McClellan

who resigned effective Dec. 1.

James (Jimmy) Tate from Highlands was recommended by unanimous vote during the meeting. Tate ran against McClellan in 2010 Republican primary.

The vote was taken after a

speech by Tate and a question and answer session.

"Jimmy Tate has been an active member of the Republican Party and an active member of the Highlands community," said

• See TATE page 9

Planning Board set to consider CD zoning

Conditional District Zoning, fences and commercial lighting were tasks discussed at the Monday, Nov. 28 Planning Board meeting.

Conditional District Zoning has been discussed at length over the last few months – brought to the forefront by Old Edwards Hospitality Group's (OEI) request to renovate the old Northland Cable Group building on NC 106 into a 9-unit apartment building.

It's in the B3 zone and incidental apartments are allowed, but only two above the downstairs commercial space.

To accommodate the 9-unit renovation, OEI wanted to rezone the parcel R3 (multifamily), but since the lot wasn't two acres, it couldn't be zoned R3 and so the 9-unit renovation was not allowed.

That segued to discussing

• See PLANNING BOARD page 10

King and Queen for the night



The Highlands School Homecoming Dance was held at the Performing Arts Center Saturday night. Crowned were seniors Cody St. Germain and Juliane Buras. For more photos see page 10.
Photo by Jim Lewicki

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New board seated Tuesday

Beginnings and endings was the theme of Tuesday night's Town Board meeting.

The board voted unanimously to hire Robert Frye as Town Manager, effective immediately. His employment contract was finalized at a 5 p.m. closed meeting Tuesday.

Mayor David Wilkes bid farewell to both Larry Rogers and Dennis DeWolf. He said everything Larry did, he did for the people of Highlands "and that's something to be admired."

He said though Dennis said it was time for him to step back, Wilkes said during his eight years on the board Dennis has always stepped forward to do whatever was asked of him.

DeWolf said he greatly appreciated being a part of the Town Board and thanked his wife Jane for her support during the past eight years as he and the board dealt with the issues and

• See TOWN BOARD page 13

FRI	SAT	SUN
44 \ 26F	42 \ 23F	43 \ 24F

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• LETTERS •

Who is running the show around here?

Dear Editor,

We have been in the Christmas tree farm "You Pick" business for 18 years and Highlands Chamber members for more than 10. We have been very pleased with Bob Kieltyka's leadership as director of the chamber until now. In fact, we have highly encouraged many Cashiers businesses to join the Highlands Chamber.

The Chamber has a sub-committee that consists of local business people called the Winter Activities Committee which is responsible for promoting business activity in the lean winter months. Many of us winter businesses have only a short six-week season to try and cover business expenses.

This last week I received some of my usual Highlands Chamber emails, one of them, "Winter Fun in Highlands" showing a beautiful email or printed publication that visitors can pick up all over town. This is also emailed to all Chamber members and any of the public that have shown an interest in the area. This tells of important dates and happenings in the area.

Much to my surprise, another Christmas tree farm that is not a Highlands Chamber member (as of December 5, 2011) and is right down the road from our farm has a whole half page devoted to them with their tree farm name fully advertised. In fact, as of December 5, 2011 our tree farm is THE only tree farm that is a member of the Highlands Chamber. Wow, I had no idea I did not have to be a Chamber member and could receive free advertising!

Food for Fuel!

A luncheon at First Presbyterian Church of Highlands to raise Funds for The Highlands Emergency Council's Fuel Program. Luncheon will be prepared by Joel Porter. Donations accepted. Make checks payable to the First Presbyterian Church designated For The Fuel Fund. Reservations would be appreciated and need to be made by Wed., Dec. 14. Call 828-526-3175.

I made a call to Bob at the Chamber and learned that the Winter Activities sub-committee is responsible for the brochure and the committee is mainly comprised of an entity in Highlands that pretty much "owns" the town of Highlands. Turns out this company and the tree farm featured in the Winter Activities brochure have been aligned for a few years.

I find it highly interesting that the Winter Activities sub-committee would not have recommended a blanket "visit our local tree farms" or mentioned all of the farms that are Chamber members. Why would the Chamber have sent out this email and printed this publication without approving what it contained? How does a business that is not even a Chamber member receive such great advertising?

I have always supported the company whose representatives sit on the Winter Activities sub-committee (as well as other boards in Highlands) by recommending

people to stay in their lodging establishments, eat in their restaurants, and purchase items from their retail stores. We even have the company listed on our website, have bought gift certificates and have defended them to many of Highlands and Cashiers residents who do not approve of the company and how its members conduct themselves.

I can now understand the negative publicity this "corporation" has received. In this day and age, I have been trying to support local businesses, but this company is trying to have a monopoly in the town of Highlands and obviously uses its positions on boards and committees to promote its interests. Our business was never called on to be represented in the Winter Activities publication.

I do not need to be a member of a Chamber of Commerce which is so blatantly is led by private interests.

Joni Wavra
Ty-Lyn Plantation

LETTERS-TO-THE EDITOR-POLICY

We reserve the right to reject or edit submissions.

NO ANONYMOUS LETTERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Views expressed are not necessarily those of Highlands' Newspaper.
Please EMAIL letters by Sunday at 5 p.m. There is a 500-word limit without prior approval.

Highlands' Newspaper

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• OBITUARY •

Betty Jane Gentile Ross



Betty Jane Gentile Ross, 87, of Highlands, NC passed away Friday, December 2, 2011 after a short stay in Highlands-Cashiers Hospital.

She was born October 15, 1924 in Sewickley, PA, and grew up in Negley and East Palestine, Ohio. She was the daughter of the late Charles and Grace Harte Gentile and a 1942 graduate of East Palestine High School. Betty was married to the late Henry Ross for 49 years and traveled widely with him during his 40-year career at Delta Air Lines. She was a homemaker and a pre-school teacher for 14 years at East Point (GA) Presbyterian Church. Betty later married the late Walton Smith of Clarksville, TN.

She was a member of First Presbyterian Church of Highlands and also a former member of East Point Presbyterian Church and Northwest Presbyterian Church. She was a member of Highlands Country Club for 28 years and a former member of the East Point Garden Club.

She will be remembered for her vivacious spirit, devotion to family, love of animals and reading, and always being in favor of having a good time with friends and relatives.

Surviving is one daughter, Paula Ross Derrick and husband Kirby of Glencoe, AL, two sons David H. Ross and wife Olga Mary Ross of Kennesaw, GA, and Henry "Hank" Ross and wife Cathy McIntyre-Ross of Highlands, NC, one sister Jean Beale of Miami, FL., a sister-in-law and brother-in-law Rose Castiglioni and Francis Ross of East Palestine, Ohio, special

•See OBITUARY page 3

This Holiday Season ...

Take a child's winter garment -- gloves, mittens, caps, hats, scarves -- to Ruka's Table, Flipside or Highlands Smokehouse and get 10% off your order!
ALSO, take an unwrapped toy for Toys for Tots to The Pizza Place on Main Street and get 10% off your order.



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... OBITUARY continued from page 2

niece Connie Hays Parish, Peachtree City, GA, three stepchildren: Mary Milam Jenkins, Walton Smith, Jr., and Corrine Smith. Four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren also survive.

Memorial services will be held Saturday, December 10, 2011 at 2 PM at the First Presbyterian Church of Highlands with Rev. Dr. Don Mullen officiating. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Hudson Library, P.O. Box 430, Highlands, NC 28741.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements. Online condolences may be made at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.



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• LOOKING AT LIFE •

Poking fun at politics

If you take your politics serious, don't read this!

This is not just about the Republicans or the Democrats or the Tea Party or Libertarians or the Whigs or whatever other corrupt political group you might hook up with. I wanna warn you, this is cynical. Oh, and if you're a Whig, you're even older than li'l ole me.

Most everyone has me pegged as a Republican but I'm not. I'm a die-hard conservative Independent. It will be me and my ilk who will decide the presidency in 2012.

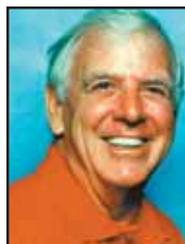
First, let's poke fun of the Republicans: Back in the day, the Republican Party represented the fat cats and spoke for the wealthy, the business people, the land barons, the bankers and the Wall Street bunch. They were symbolized by

the character on the Monopoly board...fat, bald, with a mustache.

The Democratic Party spoke for the li'l people, the workers, and the nine-to-five folks, like the WWII symbol of the lady worker wearing the bandana and showing her muscles. Back then, the lines were clearly drawn and it was obvious what each party represented.

Now, both parties represent their own personal interests and America and its citizens can go to hell.

My Pa was in the restaurant business most of his life and was a registered Republican. For payment of his taxes, he felt



Fred Wooldridge

Feedback is encouraged!
askfredanything@aol.com

our government owed him nothing...and I mean nothing...except protection from foreign invasion. How silly. Of course I had no choice. If I ever wanted back in his restaurant I would have to register as a Republican.

So here I am, a half century later, staring at a bunch of corrupt clowns on a national stage trying to convince "we the people" to vote for them in 2012. They have two things in common: they're all Republicans and they're all dishonest. There's not a statesman in the group and they all disgust me.

And having changed from being a

Republican to a conservative Independent has not helped me a bit. Presidential candidates from both parties have been disappointing me for decades. Do some research. How many past presidential candidates promised to change our unfair tax system? How about all of them! And how many did? How about none of them.

The Republicans have driven this country into such deep debt we may never recover. Who wants to vote for more of that? Oh, and remember, they're all lying through their teeth on that debate stage. Is it too late to get out of this mess we're in?

This was driven home to me in 2008 when boneheaded Senator John McCain, running on his promise to end

• See WOOLDRIDGE page 5

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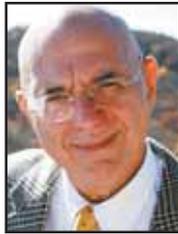
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• THE VIEW FROM HERE •

The moral of the story isn't a righteous one



Dr. Henry Salzarulo

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ing how one would go about concealing two pounds of steak while walking out of Piggly Wiggly. It would lose much of its appeal if it had been concealed in the thief's pants. Most of the items listed would be considered luxury, or at least unnecessary. Nothing supported my fantasy of the noble husband and father risking freedom and life in an effort to provide for his family. Jameson, and other expensive liquors followed expensive steak cuts. Whiskey

seems like a luxury to me, but to the alcoholic, it is a daily need. I guess as long as a person is stealing, he might as well lift the best, but I still think of the down and out drunk with a pint of Mogan David 20/20 shoved in his hip pocket.

The list includes Gillette Mach 4 razors, Ralph Lauren clothing, Chanel No.5 perfume, Nike shoes, Axe personal care products. Electric tools, iPhones, and a popular Elmo doll made the list. Elmo might be even more difficult to conceal than Filet Mignon. Shoplifting is up 6% since 2010. It is estimated that the cost to retailers will be 119 billion dollars. Electronic stores lose one thousand laptops each year.

It turns out my buddy in Seattle wasn't atypical after all. His fellow shoplifters steal, not what they need, but what they want. He might merely have been a few years ahead of the crowd.

... WOOLDRIDGE
continued from page 4

earmarks on Senate bills forever, suspended his presidential campaign to rush to the Senate floor to push a stimulus bill containing multimillions of dollars in pork barrel spending. I was stunned because I had momentarily forgotten all politicians lie and all politicians are corrupt. DUH on me!

I'm also convinced we must get President Obama out of office or we're done for as a nation. He is taking this country in the wrong direction and a whopping

•See WOOLDRIDGE page 6

It was at lovely house in suburban Seattle. The weather, while damp, was perfect for a light lunch under a covered porch. My host, something of a wind aficionado, opened a pleasantly crisp white wine. The entrée was heaping piles of Beluga caviar on toast. A guy more accustomed to peanut butter than fish eggs, I was impressed. I complimented the caviar, and his extravagance. He replied with no show of remorse, and very little embarrassment, that it was stolen. My gaze captured the elegance of the surroundings and I naively asked how he could possibly justify shoplifting. It wasn't as though he was stealing bread to feed a hungry family. His tone was matter-of-fact when he answered that the caviar was too expensive to buy. I suggested to my impervious host that if the caviar was beyond his budget, which seemed unlikely, he should have gone without or chosen a cheaper brand. He answered that he preferred Beluga to less expensive alternatives, and that was the end of it. With considerable guilt, I finished my lunch, left, and never saw my friend again.

Dr. Paul Farmer told me of unemployed Russians who stole to feed starving kids, were captured, incarcerated, and while in prison contracted fatal multiple drug resistant tuberculosis. The crime seemed justifiable, although had I owned the bakery, I might have had a different view. The punishment seemed excessive and the outcome tragic. Compared to my friend in Seattle, the unfortunate men in Paul's story seemed positively heroic. They were, for me, the model of what a shoplifter should be, and were, as far as I knew more typical.

I just read an article that claimed that one in every 11 people who leave a store take something they haven't paid for. It was a shockingly high number, but as I remembered a national unemployment rate stubbornly stuck at a crippling 9%, it became less so. The article listed the most frequently pilfered items. Surprisingly, filet mignon, not stale bread topped the list. I found myself wonder-

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• BACK DAYS IN HIGHLANDS – PART 9 •

By Herm Wilson
8/23/1905 to
1/6/1993

Uncle Henry's last poker game

"The history of the true mountaineer 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 ideas 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)

Back in the Roaring 20s us lumber jacks or loggers, as we were called, liked our teeth crowned with gold. A dentist would crown a tooth for five bucks. That was the style of the day.

We lived and worked high up in the Great Smoky Mountains of Western North Carolina, now called the Smoky Mountain National Park.

I remember Uncle Henry as we younger guys called him. He was the only man in our crew who wore a beard. Every tooth that could be seen in his mouth was crowned in gold.

Uncle Henry would play poker every night and lose every game. Sometimes he would come to me to borrow \$10. He never failed to pay me back every cent.

So one day he came to me and said, "Wilson, will you loan me 10 bucks?" Sometimes he thought he would win. I loaned him the money but I said, "Uncle Henry, I want to talk with you." He

was willing to listen. I said, "Uncle Henry, you are growing old and you need to think about the future and be planning for that." He said, "Wilson, my plans are already made."

The work that we were doing was extremely dangerous. The logs were carried overhead on a big steel cable, sometimes 400 feet high from one mountain to another where the great ledger wood skidding machine was located on a railroad track. When changing sets, as it was called, the big cable was lowered and changed to a new area.

While raising the cable one day, it got underneath a big birch tree that was down. The powerful machine lifted the tree high into the air. Uncle Henry was standing by when the tree turned loose from the cable. It came crashing to the ground. Uncle Henry thought that he was



well out of the way but he wasn't. The tree came down and crushed him to death.

I never learned if he had any relatives and if so, where they were. I am sure that the Suncrest Lumber Company gave him a decent funeral.

• 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.

This Holiday Season ...

Take a child's winter garment -- gloves, mittens, caps, hats, scarves -- to Ruka's Table, Flipside or Highlands Smokehouse and get 10% off your order!
ALSO, take an unwrapped toy for Toys for Tots to The Pizza Place on Main Street and get 10% off your order.

... WOOLDRIDGE continued from page 5

83% of Americans agree with me. HELLO!

Since socialism represents a few of the very rich and a massive amount of the very poor, I'm plotting...just in case...to be one of the very rich. (Read my journal "How to get rich from socialism while living the good life in Dubai.")

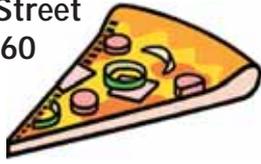
George Bush drove us into deep, deep debt and President Obama is finishing the job...putting the final nails on our coffin. Where do I turn? Well, the answer is certainly not with the Democrats, the most corrupt organization in America.

Three years ago, after drowning in eight years of Republican debt and I've lost track of how many wars nobody wanted, the country was begging for change. And change it got. Out of nowhere came this wonderful, intelligent silver tongued lemming who would take us over the cliff. America fell in love with him...and he was black. What more could one ask for? He said all the right things but, like his predecessor, George Bush, he was lying through his teeth. And he certainly broke as many campaign promises as Bush...and printed more money than Bush and borrowed more money than Bush. As a nation, we went from horrible to more horrible; a little circus music, please.

After three years in office, I'm convinced our president is on a mission to destroy capitalism. I'm a capitalist so I'll

• See WOOLDRIDGE page 11

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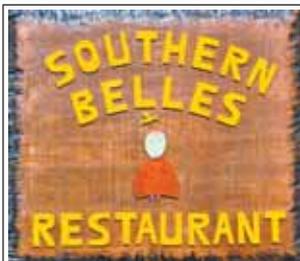
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• COACH'S CORNER •

BCS Travesty Demands Playoff

A couple of weeks ago, I outlined a plan for a playoff which would help to settle a lot of issues that currently plague the college football BCS system. Unfortunately, the BCS has failed us yet again by creating a re-match between Alabama and LSU instead of placing the most deserving one-loss team (Oklahoma St.) in the BCS National Championship.



Ryan Potts
ryanpotts@hotmail.com

"system" that is supposed to provide us with a clear national champion. A mere .009 percentage points separated Alabama and Oklahoma State, which means that some idiot with a vote who ranked OSU 5th instead of 3rd likely decided who played in the National Championship game. I would write this in all caps if I felt like it wouldn't frighten people-but how can people think

that this is a good idea on how to pick a champion? Sure, the Bammer fans are happy now, but if we keep this system it will come back to bite them eventually...it seems as if more years than not someone deserving is left out.

The one solace in all of this is that it was Oklahoma State who was left out-now maybe T. Boone Pickens will be so upset with this result that he will invest millions of dollars in getting rid of the BCS once and for all. You may laugh at that comment, but the man helped build a powerhouse in Stillwater, Oklahoma...I have no doubt that he could take down the BCS if he were so inclined.

HS Fundraisers!

Wed., Dec. 14

• Pancake Supper Highlands Boys Basketball Team fundraiser before the PTO meeting and band concert, 5:15 - 6:45 p.m. Pancakes, juice and fruit \$5 for 2 pancakes or \$7 for all you can eat.

Sat. Dec. 17

• Mountain Fresh Grocery will give the Highlands School PTO 100% of its breakfast proceeds --not profits, but all Breakfast Sales will be donated to the Highlands School PTO. The full Breakfast Menu will be available and Mountain Fresh will also be serving a special "Highlander's Blend" coffee at the Breakfast.

Alabama fans are going to hate me for this, but the bottom line is that the BCS has placed us in a position now where the only possible way for us to have a clear national champion is for Alabama to blow out the Tigers in New Orleans, and while that is a possibility, it is certainly not likely. Here's why the BCS has failed us-even if Alabama were to win...unless they win convincingly they will still have a worse loss than LSU (at home) and they will have only 4 wins against quality competition.

Oh, and also, let's not forget that Alabama didn't even win their own division or their own conference championship! Let's get real here-Alabama is in the game because they are Alabama, not because of a body of work that includes a schedule softer than Charmin-they played their two toughest games at home and avoided UGA and South Carolina out of the SEC East.

Meanwhile, Oklahoma State has beaten 5 teams that finished in the top 25 of the BCS Standings, and when naysayers said they would have to beat Oklahoma in a blowout to make a case for the BCS, they walloped their archrival on national television.

Now, with that out of the way, the real ire should be saved for the so-called



dinner to go

What's for Dinner?

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Fri	Wild caught fried shrimp, baked potatoes, hush puppies, and coleslaw	20.95
Sat	In-house smoked BBQ, coleslaw, apple and bacon baked beans, and yeast rolls	17.95

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• CONSERVATIVE POV

LOL... (Part Deux)

Talk about lousy timing... Last week we chronicled Obama's total Lack Of Leadership and the day we went to press, The Daily Caller reports: "New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie had harsh words for President Barack Obama's leadership abilities following the failure of the super committee to come to a budget agreement.

"I was angry this weekend listening to the spin coming out of the administration about the failure of the super committee and that the president knew it was doomed for failure so he didn't get involved' the Republican Governor said. 'Well then what the hell are we paying you for? It's doomed for failure so I'm not getting involved? What have you been

doing exactly?"

That is a good question. Let's look at the facts.

Since his inauguration in 2009, from most recent working backwards, Obama has visited; Bali, Australia, France, Poland, France again, UK, Ireland, El Salvador, Chile, Brazil in 2011; Afghanistan, Portugal, Japan South Korea, Indonesia, India, Canada, Czech Republic, and back to Afghanistan in 2010; Denmark, Norway, South Korea, China Singapore, Japan, Denmark again, Mexico, Ghana, Vatican City, Italy, Russia, France, Germany, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Trinidad and Tobago, Mexico again, Iraq, Turkey, Czech Republic, Germany, France, UK and Canada in 2009. Domestic trips don't count, for now.

So, Chris, safe to say, El Presidente has been doing a lot of traveling. We oldersters remember the slogan "Join the Navy and see the World." It appears you can do just as well as president. Does anybody remember any substantial benefits that resulted from his globetrotting? For us, I mean.

Then there is his penchant for the game of golf. The best information I can find is that he had played 75 rounds during his presidency by the end of June. How many since I don't know. From Right Wing News: "Between 2000 and 2008 one of the left's most cherished ways to ridicule President Bush was to point out how often he went golfing. Bush's golfing was a clear sign that he was ignoring the work he had to do in Washington and he just didn't care, they claimed. He was a playboy and a goof off, a time waster.

But now that Barack Obama has come to office all of a sudden the left has found that golf isn't worth noting, even as Obama has played the game more in just under two years (that column is a year old) than Bush did during his entire eight-year term. The word hypocrisy comes to mind."

When he isn't bothering heads of state abroad, or beating up on the little white ball, he can generally be found shooting hoops at the Interior Department Building, which is handy to the



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

White House. While most of us are spending our Sunday mornings in some form of worship, the President is spending quality time on the court with his daughters. That's nice. So that, Mr. Christie, is what he has been doing, exactly.

Eric Holder, on the other hand, has been extremely busy. He has taken up hole-digging and is digging himself in, deeper and deeper.

The Fast and Furious debacle has caused all sorts of excitement in Congress and Eric is the target of so many investigations I can't keep up.

From Yahoo! News: The Justice Department provided Congress with documents detailing how department officials gave inaccurate information to a U. S. senator in the controversy surrounding Operation Fast and Furious, the flawed law enforcement initiative aimed at dismantling major arms trafficking networks on the Southwest border.

In a letter last February to Charles Grassley, the ranking Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee, the Justice Department said that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms had not sanctioned the sale of assault weapons to a straw purchaser and that the agency makes every effort to intercept weapons that have been purchased illegally. In Operation Fast and Furious, both statements turned out to be incorrect (lies).

The Justice Department letter was responding to Grassley's statements that the Senate Judiciary Committee had received allegations from the ATF that had sanctioned the sale of hundreds of assault weapons to suspected straw purchasers. Grassley also said there were allegations that two of the assault weapons had been used in a shootout that killed customs agent Brian Terry.

In an email four days later to Justice Department colleagues, then-U.S. Attorney Dennis Burke in Phoenix said that 'Grassley's assertions regarding the Arizona investigation and the weapons recovered at the murder scene are based on categorical falsehoods. I worry that ATF will take 8 months to answer this when they should be refuting its underlying

• See SWANSON page 11

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... TATE continued from page 1

Jimmy Tate signs document to be presented to the Macon County Board of Commissioners recommending him as the person to fill Brian McClellan's vacancy.



Chris Murray, chairman of the MC Republican Party. "He is an excellent person to fill the vacancy and will work well with all of the commissioners both Republican and Democrat. Jimmy believes in fiscal

responsibility and will bode well for all the citizens of Macon County. We are proud to recommend him as our next commissioner."

McClellan resigned his position as Chairman of the MC Commission after being arrested for DWI, Friday, Nov. 18 in Sylva marking the second such arrest in a little over two years.

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 153A-27.1 (Vacancies on board of commissioners in certain counties) the interim commissioner for District I will serve until the next general election (No-

vember 2012), will have to run for that seat (and be elected) and then if that person wins will serve the remaining two years of Brian McClellan's term which expires in 2014.

"I am very excited about working for the citizens of Macon County and I am humbled and appreciative of the confidence and support that the Republican Party has provided to me with this opportunity," said Tate. "This scenario has come about very quickly and I am still absorbing the changes that will need to happen with my schedule and with my family; however, I have been grooming myself for this chance for a long time. So, I know that I am ready!" Tate said his initial goal is simple: He wants to work closely with all of the Macon County Commissioners and staff to make sure he understands the problems that Macon County is and will be facing so he can make informed decisions.

"I also know that the budget process is just around the corner, and I am definitely going to apply my belief in fiscal responsibility," he said.

Since Monday night's meeting, Tate said his phone and e-mail have been overwhelmed with continuous voices of support.

"This makes me extremely proud to call Highlands and Macon County home, and it provides extra incentive to get to work with representing our taxpayers," he said.

He is married to Allison Morton Tate and has two children, Ethan, 8 and Eliza 7. He has a BA in Landscape Architecture from the University of Georgia and owns Tate Landscaping Services, Inc.

He is a member of Highlands United Methodist Church, sits on the board of the H-C Land Trust and is chairman of its Stewardship Committee. He is a 13-year member of the Highlands Fire & Rescue Department, 11 of which he has served as an officer. He is currently Fire Lieutenant.

He is a member of the Highlands Rotary Club, is chairman of the Highlands Zoning Board and is past chairman of the Highlands Planning Board, Appearance Commission and Land Use Committee.

He was a 14-year employee of Macon County Emergency Medical Services as an EMT-1 and is a member of the EMS Quality Management Committee, the Macon County Planning Board and is vice-chairman of the MC Republican Party.

Tate will be sworn into office at the Tuesday, Dec. 13 MC Commission meeting in the boardroom at the MC Courthouse at 6 p.m.

- Kim Lewicki

• HS SPORTS/NEWS •

Coach Butch Smart approaches milestone as both Highlander teams go 2-1 this week

By Ryan Potts

The Highlanders and Lady Highlanders played their first full week of games this season, winning 2 of 3 against Andrews, Tallulah Falls, and Rosman.

The Lady Highlanders opened Monday night's game with Andrews by applying full court pressure and looking to create turnovers. While Andrews was able to handle the pressure early, the Lady Highlanders ultimately wore down the Lady Wildcats and pulled away for a 51-41 victory. Senior Emily Munger led the Highlanders with 16 points. Wednesday, the Lady Highlanders traveled to Tallulah Falls to face the Lady Indians in their first road contest of the year. As was the case versus Andrews, the Lady Highlanders were able to wear down the Lady Indians throughout the game and come away with an easy 48-24 victory. Sophomore Emily Shuler led the Lady Highlanders with 14 points, and Munger added 12.

Friday evening saw the Lady Tigers from Rosman come to Highlands on Homecoming. Highlands started the game well, turning the Lady Tigers over with their pressure defense. However, this time, the Lady Tigers did not wilt and the Lady Highlanders went cold from the field in the second half. Despite having several quality shots, Highlands just could not take advantage and Rosman was able to pull away for a 43-30 victory.

The Highlands Highlanders came out against Andrews on Monday needing just three wins to give legendary Highlands coach Butch Smart his 700th career victory. Things did not look promising early, as the Highlanders struggled to score against Andrews' 2-3 zone. After trailing by 5 at

the half, the Highlanders were able to speed the game up in the second half and force overtime, where they prevailed 50-47. Junior Dax Lloyd led the Highlanders with 24 points, and Junior Taylor Osteen added 13.

Wednesday, the Highlanders traveled to Tallulah Falls to face the Indians, and dominated the game from start to finish for a final of 51-18. Lloyd was again the Highlanders leading scorer with 18 points. Friday, the Highlanders faced Rosman looking to get Smart his 700th win. This time, the Highlanders started strong, pushing out to a 9 point lead in the second quarter. As

with the girls game, however, the Highlanders hit a cold stretch in their shooting in the third quarter. During this stretch, the Tigers hit 3 pointers on three straight possessions to grab the lead. The Highlanders were never able to recover from this three point barrage and fell, 60-52. Lloyd scored 19 for the Highlanders, and Seniors Isaac Beavers and Cody St. Germain added 11 and 10 respectively.

The Highlanders will host conference rival Hiwassee Dam this Friday in their first conference matchup of the season, so come out and support your Highlanders!

Children's book author comes to Highlands School

Author Darlene Conley visited Highlands School recently with her dog, Leo. Leo is the inspiration for her first children's book, *Leo's Job*. Ava Schmitt, a member of Mrs. Miller's second grade class, helped her with Leo while Conley read her book. Conley presented the students in Mrs. Miller's class with copies of the book which is illustrated by Isabella Kung. Conley plans to continue writing children's books about Leo and her daughter, Christie.

Photo by Carol Bowen



... PLANNING BOARD from page 1

Conditional District Zoning not to be confused with Conditional Use Zoning which the Town Board has used to accommodate multi-family developers in the past.

With Conditional Use Zoning, developers still had to meet the underlying criteria for R3, particularly the acreage component, and the "conditions" requested by the developers of Old Highlands Park and Town Place Condominiums were negotiated with the Town Board.

In both cases conditions were made concerning buffering and setbacks and in return the developer accommodated the Town Board by supplying a sidewalk.

Both developers had to go through the painstaking process of hearings before the Town Board, the Appearance Commission, the Planning Board and finally the Zoning Board to get a Special Use Permit (SUP).

But Conditional District zoning is different and Town Planner David Clabo said it has been allowed by the legislature since 2005 and more and more municipalities are using it.

Since Highlands Land Use plan stressed the need for more incidental apartments and more multi-family configurations in town and since Conditional District zoning would be a mechanism to accomplish that, the Planning Board is working on an ordinance.

But the process and allowances in the Conditional District are different from Conditional Use Zoning.

Like Conditional Use Zoning, Conditional District Zoning is done on a case-by-case basis and doesn't set precedence for future projects.

However, unlike Conditional Use Zoning, in Conditional District Zoning, just about everything including allowed uses in the underlying zone is erased.

Clabo said the only requirement that must stay is the watershed built-upon which is state-mandated.

Clabo urged the board to just consider R3-CD, (Multi-family,

Conditional District) for now — to focus on multi-family needs in town — now being called workforce or affordable housing by proponents of the change.

Member Mike Bryson suggested Conditional District zoning for other purposes, as well, namely as a way to accommodate owners of properties whose size limits what can be done to an existing structure.

Members Alan Marsh and Linda Clark voiced concern over Conditional District Zoning, especially when the board learned that the uses allowed by the underlying zone would be erased.

In addition, Conditional District zoning doesn't require a SUP like Conditional Use Zoning, and only has to be heard by the Planning and Town boards.

Marsh said without any rules applying to the zone, it will come down to who knows (likes) whom on the boards.

For instance, though it's not likely to be OKed, theoretically, someone could ask for a R3-CD zone in a R1 (residential) neighborhood.

Clabo said by law the owner or developer must hold two meetings in the neighborhood where the parcel exists — not to be confused with a Town-run public hearing — so citizens would have to be informed as to what is planned in the neighborhood so they could voice opinions.

Besides the "political" ramifications, Clark said once zoning stipulations are erased, the town has nothing to use to uphold its decision to allow or disallow a project in a Conditional District. She feared decisions would appear to be arbitrary.

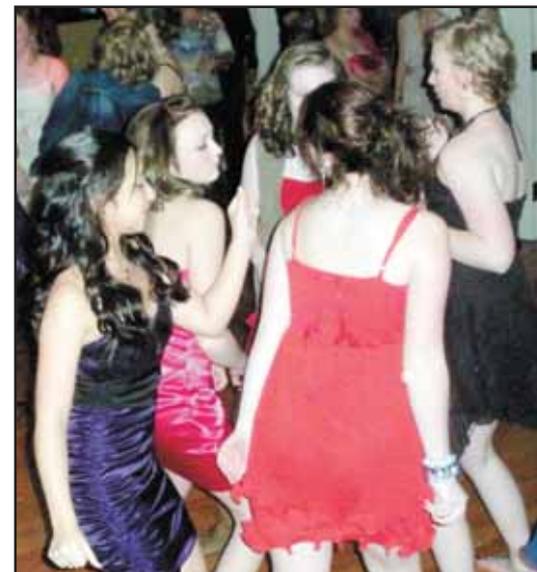
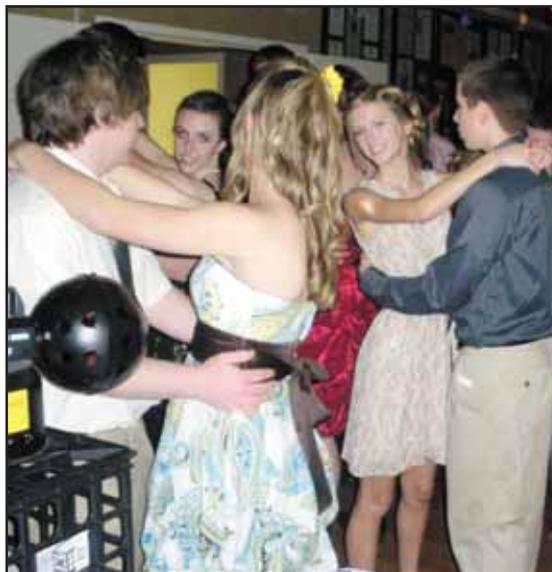
All along Clabo has said for Conditional District zoning to work, citizens must trust and believe in their elected and appointed boards.

The Planning Board asked Clabo to return to the Dec. 12 Planning Board meeting with a R3-CD draft which will be loosely based on the Wilmington, NC Conditional District ordinance.

Fences have popped up along

• See PLANNING BOARD page 16

HS Homecoming Dance – 2011



Photos by Kim and Jim Lewicki



This year's dance was held at the Performing Arts Center. Crowned were seniors Cody St. Germain and Juliane Buras. Students in the 9th-12th grade attended.

Think Christmas from Highlands!

... SWANSON
continued from
page 8

accusations right now? That email marked the start of an internal debate in the Justice Department over what and how much to say in response to Grassley's allegations. The fact that there was an ongoing investigation into Terry's murder prompted some at the Justice Depart to argue for less disclosure."

The story goes on and on detailing how to escape the ramifications of the blunder. The DoJ is corrupt, headed by an incompetent lawyer who is Obama's chief thug. Holder should be fired...now.

... WOOLDRIDGE
continued from
page 6

be forced to vote for the clown who runs against him. Sad, sad, sad!

I was hoping I was wrong about Obama. He and his cronies are hard at work on the destruction of capitalism. The majority of Americans feel it's too late to save this nation from financial collapse that will usher in the end of capitalism.

So I pray God will send a person to save us. A person with good moral character who does not lie, has not taken money for political favors or gain and has not succeeded by being dishonest. God, send us a person who is not for the little people or the big people but for all the people, a person who is smart enough to pull this nation back together again; a person who will circle the wagons and be willing to take on the hard fight to bring us back to being the greatest nation on the planet. But send him quick, Lord, we're almost out of time.

Are you aware you can read Fred's mystery/thriller titled *Deceived* on your Kindle or Nook? Download it today!

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Daily

• CORE classes at Mountain Fitness on Carolina Way. Tues., Thurs., Sat., 9:30; Mon., Wed.,



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

Sunday, December 11th
The Mountaintop Ringers
will play during the 10:50 worship
service.

Sunday, December 18th
10:50am
Christmas Cantata

Christmas Eve Services:
5 pm
Family-Friendly Candlelight
Service

7 - 8pm
Drop-in Communion

11pm
Candlelight Service

Christmas Day
Sunday, December 25th
10:50am
Join us for an informal worship
service

315 Main Street - 526-3376
Pastors: Beth Bowser
Paul Christy

Thurs., 5:15. \$10 per class or ask about specials.
Call 526-9083. (st. 6/9)

Mon., Wed., Fri.

- Heart Healthy Exercise Class at the Rec Park. 8:30-9:30 a.m. \$20/month.
- Step Aerobics with Tina Rogers at the Rec Park, 8-9 a.m. \$10 per class or \$40 a month.
- Zumba at the Rec Park, 9:05a-10a. \$5 per class. First class free. Call Mary Barbour for Franklin schedule: 828-342-2498.

Mondays

- Closed AA meeting, 5:30 p.m. at the Episcopal Church at Fifth and Main streets.
- Monday Madness at Fressers Eatery in Historic Helen's Barn. \$5 burgers, \$1 off beers all day.
- Highlands Rotary Club meets at noon at the Highlands Conference Center at noon.
- Closed AA Women's meeting, 5:30 p.m. at the Episcopal Church at Fifth and Main streets.

Tuesdays

- The Highlands Mountaintop Rotary meets at 7:30 a.m. in the dining room at the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Enter the hospital in the main or emergency entrance and follow the signs downstairs. Visitors are welcome. Meetings end at 8:30 am.

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

- The Homegrown Buds, a homeschool 4-H club, meets at noon at the Macon County Library on Siler Road in Franklin at 1 p.m.

Wednesdays

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

Every 3rd Wednesday

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

Thursdays

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

- The Highlands Writers Group meets at 1 p.m. at the Hudson Library on Thursdays. Free writing exercises. Bring a seven-minute writing piece to read. Newcomers are welcome. Call Anne Doggett at 526 8009.

Every Saturday

- Ruka's Wine Tastings from 4:30- 6:30 p.m. Jazz begins at 7:30 p.m.

Every Third Saturday

- The Highlands Memorial Post #370 of the American Legion meets at the Shortoff Baptist Church. Breakfast is at 9 am. Meeting is at 10 a.m. All veterans are invited to attend.

Thursday, Dec. 8

- A Special Town Board meeting at 7 p.m. in the Community Building to discuss the Town Manager-Council form of government with representatives from the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Government.

• The League of Women Voters will present a program on Social Services in Macon County. Please bring your donations of warm coats, toys, and non-perishable foods to share with those who need them during this Christmas season. The program will be held at Tartan Hall in Franklin. Lunch is available at noon, by reservation. Call 371-0527 or email lwvmacon@wild-dog-mountain.info. The program will begin at 12:15. The public is invited.

Sat. Dec. 10

• Breakfast with Santa at the Highlands United Methodist Church at 8:30 a.m., \$10 per family. CALL 526-3376 for more information.

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a strenuous 12-mile hike, with elevation change of 2,000 ft., to the summit of Standing Indian Mountain. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin (across from Burger King) at 9 a.m. Drive 30 miles round trip. Bring lunch and plenty of water. Call leader Don O'Neal, 828-586-5723. Able visitors welcome, but no pet.

• Second annual Arts, Crafts and More Festival from 10-3 at the National Guard Armory, 611 Webster Rd, past Southwestern Community College Available for artists, crafters and those promoting a home based or small business are spaces for \$20, \$25, \$30 or \$50. Contact Sharon at 828-586-850, 226-0045.

• Shop with a Cop 5K Race and 1-mile Fun Run/Walk beginning at the Franklin High School parking lot. Registration is a 8 a.m.; the race begins

at 9 a.m. Registration is \$25 and the first 120 to register gets a T-shirt. Awards given to top three males and females overall and winners of each age division. Money raised will be used to fund the Shop with a Cop program this Christmas season. For more information, call the Sheriff's Dept.

• At The Bascom -- Hot Chocolate Events. View exhibitions and Holiday Storytelling. Call 526-4949.

• Live Band at ElAzteca Mexican Restaurant in Highlands Plaza. Drink specials all night long!

Sat. & Sun., Dec 10-11

• Community Christmas Chorale 5 p.m. at the Highlands United Methodist Church.

Sun. Dec. 11

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate-to-strenuous 7-mile hike to Boteler Peak via the Chunky Gal Trail, with a view at the top worth the climb. Meet at the Club House at 9 am. Drive 30 miles round trip. Bring water and lunch. Call leader Chris Shaw, 371-0183, for reservations. Visitors welcome, but no dogs please.

Tuesday, Dec. 13

• Come and listen to the stories at the Story Swap on Tuesday at 7:30 pm, at the Ugly Dog Pub at 294 S. Fourth St. in Highlands. The theme for December is "Anything Holiday." If you have a 5-7 minute story to tell or read, sign up at the pub or call 369-1927.

Wed., Dec. 14

Storytellers in The Atrium, Hot Chocolate and Holiday Music Enjoy the spirit of the season at The Bascom

There is so much to see and do at The Bascom in December.

• The Bascom's "Hot Chocolate Events" will warm your heart. On December 10 and 17 from 3-5 p.m., visitors can come out and view the exhibitions, enjoy free hot chocolate or coffee, holiday storytelling and music from Sarah Harkins and Bryan Heller.

• With 29 participating local non-profits, The Bascom's Giving Trees exhibition will amaze visitors with a stunning showcase of festive holiday trees. Best of all, donations made for the Giving Trees, at The Bascom through January 3, will benefit the participating non-profit organizations.

• Tools in Motion: Works from the Hechinger Collection, a traveling exhibition organized by International Arts &

Artists, Washington, DC, featuring 20th century art that celebrates repetition and motion in common, everyday tools and hardware, continues through December 23rd.

• And coming in January, Art Cinema at The Bascom, every Saturday at 2 pm and the first Winter Barn Dance of the season, January 28 from 7-8 pm.

The Bascom is now open year-round - Monday through Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm and Sunday, 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 or call 828.526.4949.

Upcoming Events

• Pancake Supper Highlands Boys Basketball Team fundraiser before the PTO meeting and band concert, 5:15 - 6:45 p.m. Pancakes, juice and fruit \$5 for 2 pancakes or \$7 for all you can eat.

• Student Symposium at Highlands Biological Station when students will present their Internship projects. For more information, call 526-2602.

Thursday, Dec. 15

• HCP presents its annual free Christmas Reading at PAC at 7:30 p.m. A mix of serious and humorous.

Friday, December 16

• Audubon Christmas Bird County. Call 526-2775 for more information.

• Atlanta Boy Choir performance at The Cathedral of St. Philip on 2744 Peachtree Road in Atlanta at 7:30 P.M. Tickets are \$20 and may be ordered by calling our office at 404.378.0064 or ordered online at www.atlantaboychoir.org (major credit cards accepted).

Sat. Dec. 17

• Mountain Fresh Grocery will give the Highlands School PTO 100% of its breakfast proceeds --not profits, but all Breakfast Sales will be donated to the Highlands School PTO. The full Breakfast Menu will be available and Mountain Fresh will also be serving a special

"Highlander's Blend" coffee at the Breakfast.

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate-to-strenuous 5-mile hike from Deep Gap to the top of Standing Indian Mtn. at 5490 ft., an elevation change of 1200 ft. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin (across from Burger King) at 10 a.m. Drive 40 miles round trip. Call leader Gail Lehman, 524-5298 for reservations.

• La Noche Navidena at the Highlands Civic Center from 6-9 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 18

• Auditions for the Highlands Cashiers Players' production of Tennessee Williams "Cat On A Hot Tin Roof" will take place on Sunday at 3 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center, 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands NC. There are roles for three men, ages 25 - 50 and three men, ages 50 - 70. Roles for women include four women, ages 25 - 50 and two women, ages 50 - 70. The main roles of Margaret (Maggie) and Brick have already been cast. There are also three roles for children under 12 years. The production will take place February 23 - 26 and March 2 - 6, 2012, at the Performing Arts Center in Highlands. Copies of the play are at the Hudson Library in Highlands and the Cashiers Library. For more information call director Donna Cochran at 828-526-2080 or 770-317-6307.

... TOWN BOARD continued from page 1

came up with solutions. He also thanked the town employees "who are the heart and soul of the town and who give of themselves and ultimately make us look good."

Magistrate Pat Taylor then swore John Dotson, Eric Pierson and Brian Stiehler into office. Once they took their seats, a silent vote was taken and Commissioner Gary Drake was named Mayor Pro Temp.

Mayor David Wilkes then make committee assignments for the Rec Park, Public Safety, Public Works, and Finance.

The last piece of business was the dissolving of the Cemetery Committee and the Advisory Committee for the Scholarship Endowment Fund. Neither of those committees have met in years, as their duties have been absorbed by other entities.

The board will meet Thursday, Dec. 8 at 7 p.m. at the Community Building to discuss the Manager-Council form of government with representatives from UNC-Chapel Hill's School of Government and to appoint John Underwood to the Zoning Board.

- **Kim Lewicki**



Above, John Dotson, Eric Pierson and Brian Stiehler were sworn into office by Magistrate Pat Taylor. Below, Mayor David Wilkes honored Dennis DeWolf's eight years on the board and Larry Rogers four years with kind words and plaques noting their service. Rogers was not present. Photos by Kim Lewicki



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• JUST HERS •

Maman Takes Manhattan, Part I

There is no good time to hear that your father is dying. Still, when we heard it on Christmas Eve of 1999, it was particularly hard to hear. My mother and I were standing near the nurses' station, where the local radio was playing "Silver Bells" softly in the background. My father's doctor came out of his room, looked at us, and shook his head. He put one arm around Maman, and the other around me. We stood there in the hallway, crying, all three of us. And then, all cried out, we wiped our eyes and went in to see Daddy. We did what the women in my family always do; we maintain.

My grandmother was 96 when she died, so I always as-

sumed that my mother would equal her record. When I asked Maman how long she wanted to live, she stated that she didn't want to live so long that Eric and I would say to each other, "Are you taking Mommy this year for Christmas? It was my turn last year." Since I had moved from Paris back to the States, the holidays had been spent with my parents, whose celebration of the event was a low-key affair which was big on the food, and not so much on anything else. We didn't even have a tree.

I wasn't thinking of Christmas, or New Year's Eve, either, when I got that phone call from Maman in early October. "What are you doing for Christmas?" she asked, and I didn't know



Michelle Mead-Armor
michiemead@aol.com

what to answer. "Well," I began, trying to think of something quickly, "I hadn't really given it much thought." I decided to turn the tables. "How about you? Any plans?" And then my mother did

the **French Mother Thing**. The **French Mother Thing** is kind of like the **Jewish Mother Thing**, only with more Bordeaux and baguettes. Maman did a routine which we commonly refer to in my family as "doing a Sarah Bernhardt," after the famous French actress. In a plaintive little voice, she said, "Oh, I was just thinking of doing something small. Maybe getting a little smoked salmon. Watching the Mormon Tabernacle Choir on PBS. Drinking a split of champagne on New Year's Eve, and going to bed by nine." You could almost hear the violins in the background, playing something plaintive. Guilt washed over me like slush over low boots. Scrambling to be

a good daughter, I blurted, "Well, you could always come up to New York." This was greeted with silence. Having started, I continued, gaining enthusiasm as I went on. "Yeah, we could go to Rockefeller Center, and see the Christmas tree. We could go to St. Patrick's Cathedral. We could go to Radio City Music Hall, and see the Rockettes. And the shopping! The food!" In trying to sell this to my mother, even I was caught up in the excitement of the moment. Hey, this just might be fun, for both of us. The next two months are a blur. Every weekend was filled with furious cleaning and tidying.

• See JUST HERS page 19

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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

The 'specialness' of Christmas

**Paul Christy
Highlands United
Methodist Church**



As I sat out in the street for the lighting of the Christmas tree this year, I could not help but be amazed at how this whole community embraces the essence of the season of Christmas. I had traveled back that Saturday with my family from stuffing ourselves at Thanksgiving, and we had my mom. So she was with us this year at the lighting of the tree, and she was impressed.

The weather was perfect; the choir sang real well and Dr. Bowman read the Christmas story as beautifully as I have ever heard it. After Santa came out and gave the count down, right on cue, the tree lit up and there was a cheer. My mom said, "Paul that was the most beautiful thing I have ever seen, the people packing the street the choir singing the feeling in the air that night was special. Now I am in the mood and I feel I have the spirit of the season."

Why do I tell you this little bit of family history? Because you see I grew up in a preachers' family and in my 50 years of life I have seen lavish Christmas Cantatas, singing Christmas trees, live Nativity scenes, and countless Christmas plays, but yet I am convinced that gathering as a whole community on Main Street in Highlands is one of the best things I have ever been a part of. It seems to signal that it is time to get ready for something special.

What makes Christmas special is not the expensive presents, it is not the receiving of the right gift, and it is not even all the parties we tend to go to this time of year. Instead the specialness of the Christmas season is the relationships we have with family and friends. What I have come to learn is that what matters in life is not what we have or do not have, what matters are the relationships we make and sustain.

To me that is one of the most beautiful parts of the Christmas story. God chose to be in a relationship with the world, with us. God chose to be born in stable, not a palace. God chose to announce the Good News of Christ's birth to the working man of that day — the shepherds. God chose to bring a message of love and grace to the world, not just a select few. So this Christmas, I challenge you as I challenge myself to give the gifts that matter. May you give a gift of love, may you give a gift of encouragement to another person, and may you give the gift of a relationship to another. I am convinced that far too often in life we point to our differences as human beings. What if we shared what we

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 22

John 3:16

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

Proverbs 3:5

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Wed.: Men's Bible Study - 8:30 a.m., First Baptist Church

Thurs.: Women's Prayer Group - 10 a.m., Whiteside Presbyterian
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Tuesday: 8 a.m. Men's Cursillo Group; Bible Study 10:30 a.m.
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Worship, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday: Prayer Service, 6:30 p.m.

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Pastor Paul Christy 526-3376
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Wed: Supper; 6; 7:15 – children, youth, & adults studies; 6:15 –
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p.m.

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

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Olde Mountain Christmas Parade

... PLANNING BOARD continued from page 10

Highlands corridors and so at Commissioner Gary Drake's request made at the Nov. 15 Town Board meeting, the Planning Board is working up an ordinance regulating fences.

Monday night the board decided that regulations would only apply to fences in commercial or residential zones adjacent to public roadways; they would only apply to front yards though height restrictions might be considered for side and rear yards; that solid privacy fences would be discussed with vegetative screening suggested to soften the look of the fence.

Height restrictions were discussed – possibly capped at four feet, but that might change if the fence is more open rather than solid. Distance from roadways would be determined by rights-of-way and water/sewer lines.

Clabo suggested a color scheme be encouraged saying the "raw" fences recently constructed might look better once they weather.

The board requiring the Appearance Commission to consider fence designs in residential and commercial zones was necessary.

Next, the board discussed the Town Board's concern about the potential of excessive outdoor lighting levels in commercial areas. The Dark Sky Association has developed a model ordinance for municipalities to consider, but it is long and very detailed. Clabo recommended that if the Town adopts an ordinance to control commercial outdoor lighting levels, then it does not need to be so complicated. It can be simple, but it must be enforceable and effective. An example from another town was distributed to the Planning Board members as background information and for review prior to the next meeting on Monday, December 12, 2011 at 5:30 pm.

— **Kim Lewicki**



Photos by Jim Lewicki

The annual Christmas Parade was held on Main Street under sunny skies with balmy weather, Saturday, Dec. 3. There were 82 participants representing area churches, nonprofits, businesses and schools.

• HEALTH MATTERS •

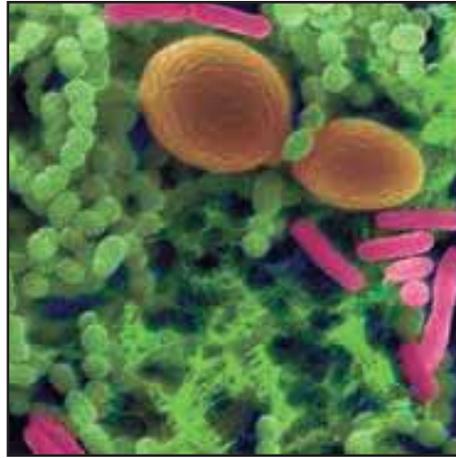
Oral Bacteria Changes Linked to Pneumonia Risk

There are lots of different types of oral bacteria living in our mouths. Some are good, some are bad, and a recent study showed that changes in the types of bacteria seems to predict the onset of pneumonia.

The study looked at healthy adults living in normal communities, nursing home residents and ICU patients. "We showed that as the risk for pneumonia increased among these three groups of adults, that certain types of bacteria living in their mouths decreased. Interestingly, in the adults who actually developed pneumonia, other disease-causing bacteria in their mouths actually increased days before those adults actually developed pneumonia" said Dr. Samit Joshi of Yale University.

Dr. Joshi feels that this discovery may help develop ways to prevent pneumonia in the future, particularly in hospital patients. "It may lead to new and improved ways that we can prevent pneumonia by maintaining the composition of bacteria which live inside our mouths."

Every week there is a new study that shows oral health affecting our overall health. Most people prefer not to think



about the colonies of bacteria that are breeding in their mouths but those bacteria are the cause of gum disease and tooth decay. To keep your smile in optimal health required regular visits to your dentist for professional cleanings. If it has been a while since your last visit please contact Wilbanks Smile Center in Toccoa, GA today at 706-886-9439. We are a full-service dental office serving patients in Northern Georgia and Macon County, NC.

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- Charles from Highlands, NC

Charles, the key with treating Diabetic Retinopathy is early identification and early treatment. If we catch it early enough, we can arrest it before you even know you have a problem and far before any loss of vision. But again, the key is to catch it early. I encourage you to schedule regular vision checkups with your Ophthalmologist so that you may catch such problems early, arrest the progression of the condition and prevent permanent vision loss.

~ Richard Blue, M.D.



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• BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NEWS •



Smokey the Bear visits Highlands School First-graders to participate in Smokey Bear/ Woodsy Owl Poster Contest

Last Tuesday morning, Nov. 29, Mr. Greg Brooks, Fire Management Officer, Nantahala Ranger District, visited Mrs. Sizemore's 1st grade class at Highlands School.

He told the students the story of Smokey Bear and why Smokey wants everyone to prevent wildfires. He talked about good fires and bad fires and how Smokey uses a shovel to put out fires. He gave Mrs. Sizemore a DVD about Smokey Bear to show her class, as well as gift bags for the students.

Then Smokey Bear arrived to visit with

the students. After Smokey left the room, Dr. Rebecca Schilling of Mountain Garden Club talked with the class about making Smokey Bear posters. Mrs. Sizemore's students will participate in the 2012 Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Poster Contest which is sponsored by the U. S. Forest Service and the National Garden Clubs, Inc.

An added bonus was that Mrs. McClellan's kindergarten students had a celebrity sighting in the hallway: they got to see Smokey Bear, too!

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Mountain Garden Club parade 'dance' on YouTube

By Dr. Becky Schilling

If you didn't get to see the Mountain Garden Club dancers do their routine in this year's Highlands Olde Mountain Christmas Parade, check out the video on YouTube. Go to it directly by searching for '2011 MGC Christmas Parade 2011'. Or search for 'Mountain Garden Club' and scroll down.

The Mountain Garden Club enjoys creating unique performances for the pa-

rade. This was the 14th year the club has participated. The club's first entry was in 1998 with 'Jingle Bell Rock'.

Costumes this year were designed and constructed by Barbara Werder and Joan Levinson. Choreography was by Dr. Becky Schilling. The video on YouTube is courtesy of Charles B. Cooper.

The Mountain Garden Club wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and the happiest of holidays!

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... JUST HERS continued from page 14

Anyone whose mother is coming for a visit knows the feeling. You clean for hours on end, and then your mother comes up behind you and says, "Missed a spot!" in that annoying way. Everyone seemed to know Maman was coming. Each day I was so stopped by the doorman, the super, the manicurist, the dry cleaner, the checkout lady in the supermarket. "So, when's ya Mom getting' heah?" they would ask. Because, in this country where we are often separated from our families by time and distance, there is something about a family reunion, even a mini-one, that warms the heart. Finally, it was the day of Maman's arrival, and as it was a workday, it seemed particularly long and tedious. In the end, my kindly German boss, Alex, waved me

on my way, so that I could beat the traffic to the airport. Arriving at La Guardia, I checked the flight list, and took off toward the gate of the Charlottesville to New York flight. Waiting for my mother always makes me anxious, especially if I haven't seen her in a while. I worry if I'll recognize her, the feelings of anxiety and guilt already taking over. And then, the flight arrives and Maman comes through the door.

Her hat is at a jaunty angle, and her eyes sweep the room, looking for me. At last, our eyes meet, and we beam at each other as we rush toward that first contact, that long-awaited hug. I tower over her, so I wind up with my chin squashing her hat. "Good flight?" I ask. "Oh, I met the nicest young man who helped me with my suitcase," she replies, because my mother al-

ways finds a nice young man, or a nice young woman, or a nice somebody. Nice people always seem to come out of the woodwork rushing to the aid of my tiny, elegant French mother.

We go down the escalator to pick up Maman's luggage, and then we board the shuttle bus on our way into Manhattan. I always love that trip! You seem to be lost in the traffic, and then there's a turn where you see the skyline of New York for the first time. We make that turn, and Maman lets out a little gasp. She is taking in the view with an almost childish enthusiasm. In turn, I see it through her eyes, and feel an overwhelming sense of pride that I am going to show my mother the best time - we are going to have the best Christmas, the best New Year's ever.

The shuttle bus pulls up in front of my building on East 52nd Street. The driver retrieves my mother's suitcase, and insists on bringing it into the building. In turn, the doorman rushes out to grab it. I chuckle as I watch these two knights in shining armor, dueling over my mother's matched luggage. Maman admires the lobby, decked out with both a stunning

Christmas tree and an impressive menorah - it is New York, after all. The doorman escorts us to the elevator, and pushes the button for the eighth floor. And then, we are home. I'm glad I made the effort to put a pretty decoration on my front door. I escort my mother inside, and she rushes to look out the windows overlooking the street. From my place, we can see into apartments with trees and decorations. Directly across from us, the Norwegian Church is looking festive. Maman looks at me, and I realize it has all been worth it, all that worrying, and planning, and cleaning. It isn't all about showing her a good time; I realize that I'm going to enjoy myself, too, showing her the city that I now call home.

• 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 has written a special holiday story which she will be presenting at the Annual Christmas Reading at the PAC on Chestnut Street, 7:30pm on December 15th. Bring Kleenex.

• BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NEWS •

J-MCA is looking to grow its board

The Jackson-Macon Conservation Alliance is looking for a few more great minds to add to our board of directors and are currently taking applications for new board members. Anyone that may be interested should contact our Executive Director, Michelle Price by email at mprice@j-mca.org to request a copy of our board member application form.

The following people are currently on the J-MCA board: Dan Allen, Real Estate Agent with Silver Creek Realty; W. Travis Boswell, co-owner of the Orchard Restaurant; Michael Kettles, Environmental Consultant; Dawn Sanborn, Physical Therapist Assistant; Courtney Scarborough, Accountants Receivable for Warth Construction; Robert E. Smith PhD, retired University Administrator; and Brian Stiehler, Highlands Country Club Golf Superintendent and newly elected Town of Highlands Board Member.

The Jackson-Macon Conservation Alliance is a grassroots conservation organization whose mission is to address environmental issues through education, advocacy, collaboration and hands-on initiatives. We are working to take care of our natural resources to enhance and sustain quality of life and ensure the long-term health of the Cashiers and Highlands area and its people. We have several initiatives underway including Friends of Whiteside Mountain, Living

Safely with Black Bears, Natural Resource Protection, Sustainable Development, Convenient Recycling and Energy Efficiency.

Board Members are not required to be full time residents; however, they should be at least part-time residents. If you are interested in lending a hand but not interested in serving on our board please contact our Executive Director to let her know that you are interested and how you are interested in helping. Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you in the New Year.

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(st. 6/30)
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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. 8/1)

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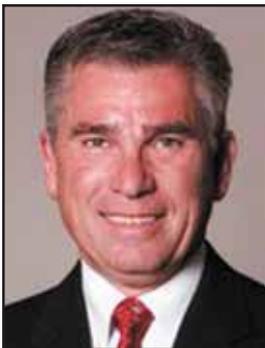
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• BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NEWS •

Davis earns 'Defender of Liberty' rating

Senator Jim Davis



North Carolina's Sen. Jim Davis was awarded The American Conservative Union's (ACU) highest "Defender of Liberty" rating. The ACU tracks a wide range of issues before Congress and State Legislatures to determine which issues and votes serve as a clear litmus test identifying legislators who defend our founding principles – constitutionally limited government, individual liberty, free markets, a strong national defense and traditional values.



Rotary November Scholars

The Rotary Club of Highlands honored the November Highlands School Scholars of the Month at its November 28 meeting. Shown with Highlands School Counselor, Thomas Jessup and Rotary club president, Bill Futral are middle school winner, Cole Wilkes, high school winner, Emily Murphy, and elementary school winner, Joana Jimenez.



Rotary Bingo at Win-Win

The Rotary Club of Highlands partnered with local law enforcement agencies to sponsor SHOP WITH A COP BINGO on December 1. All net proceeds were donated to our local area shop with a cop program. This annual event allows needy children the opportunity to go shopping with a cop to pick out holiday gifts for themselves and their family. Misty Holland won the final game and took home \$200. She is shown with Highlands police chief Bill Harrell, Rotary member and Bingo caller Tay Bronaugh and Macon County Sheriff Robbie Holland.



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... SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING continued from page 15

all held in common? We all want to be loved, we all want to be accepted, and we all want to feel needed.

So what are you giving this year for Christmas? May it be a gift of love and appreciation to another human being? If we start there, there is no telling how long the Christmas story will last in our world. May you all have a blessed Christmas and may we all remember that God's love is for the world, not just a select few, but for the world.

Isn't it amazing that a lighting of Christmas Tree on November 26th started to get me in the mood for Christmas. Now I am fired up, how about you?



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 • At The Bascom -- Hot Chocolate Events. View exhibitions and Holiday Storytelling. Call 526-4949.
 • Photos with Santa at the Visitor Center 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
 • Live Band at El Azteca Mexican Restaurant in Highlands Plaza. Drink specials all night long! Sat. & Sun., Dec 10-11
 • Community Christmas Chorale 5 p.m. at the Highlands United Methodist Church.



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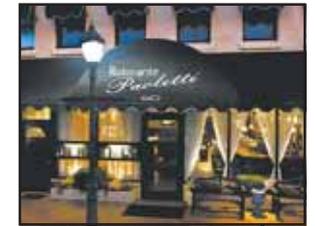
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