

Highlands' Newspaper

FREE

Volume 9, Number 3

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Thursday, Jan. 20, 2011

FRI	SAT	SUN
30 17F	34 18F	35 20F

Sat., Jan. 22

- At The Bascom, Winter Barn Dance honoring educators from 7-10 p.m. Tickets are \$5. Call the Chamber of Commerce at 526-2112 for more information.

- At Paoletti's Restaurant, intimate Wine Tasting at the bar at 1 pm. Great inexpensive wines from around the world, available for retail sales daily. Cheese and Crackers are served. Cost: \$20 per person refundable with case purchase.

- At Cyprus International Restaurant, music beginning at 9 p.m. No cover.

Thursday, Jan. 20

- Taize in Highlands, 5:30 at Our Lady of the Mountain Catholic Church.

Sunday, Jan. 23

- Pizza dinner to benefit the Highlands Bolivian Mission fundraiser from 1-8 p.m. We deliver. Call 526-3376. Large Cheese with two toppings \$25; Three or more toppings, \$35. Choose from extra cheese cheddar, mozzarella, or provolone, mushrooms, green peppers, onions, black olives, beef, pepperoni, sausage, bacon, jalapenos.

Tuesday, Jan. 25

- Western style square dance lessons begin on Tuesday from 6- 8 P.M. at Highlands Civic Center. The 10 classes will be taught by professional caller/instructor Jim Duncan. Join Highlands Drifters for hours of fun and exercise for only \$65!

Town Board votes 3-2 to amend charter

After the persistent lobbying of commissioners by Mayor David Wilkes, the board's Nov. 6, 3-2 vote — to leave the town charter as is — was put back on the Jan. 12 agenda. On Jan. 12, the vote was flipped 3-2 — this time to change the charter and to instruct Town Attorney Bill

Coward to change the words “the board” to the “Town Manager” throughout the ordinance.

In addition, the following paragraph was added: “The Town Manager shall consult with the Board of Commissioners, in closed session, prior the termination of any em-

ployee, unless circumstances require immediate termination.”

At the Jan. 19 Town Board meeting, following much discussion which brought to light several new questions concerning the

•See CHARTER page 16

Lupoli project up for Main Street grant funding

On the recommendation of Town Manager Jim Fatland, the Town Board voted unanimously to request that John Lupoli be the recipient of up to \$200,000 from the Dept. of Commerce's Main Street Program.

If selected, he will use the money to renovate and expand his Town Square complex on Main Street to include public restrooms — something sorely needed in town.

The project could be one of up to 10 grants approved by the program, and though \$200,000 is up for grabs, a lesser amount can be awarded.

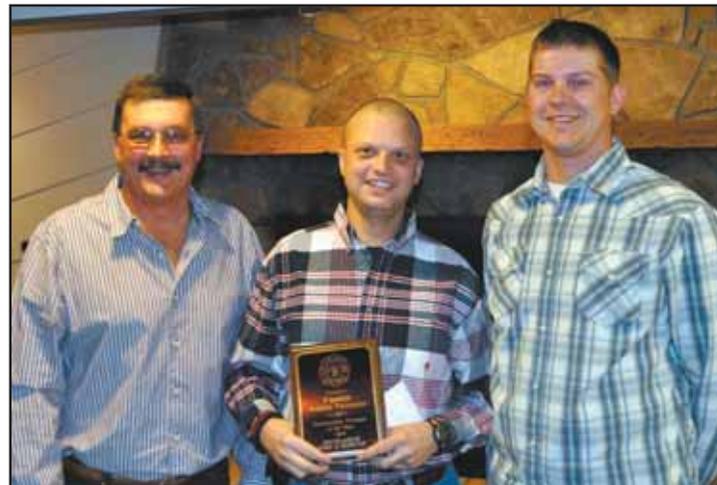
In either case, the recipient must match \$2 for each \$1 awarded. The town will not spend any money, but will administer the funds.

The grant is geared toward private investment within the downtown area that would create and maintain jobs.

“The Town Square property owned by John Lupoli is a prime

•See MAIN STREET page 16

Dept. selects 'Fireman of the Year'



At Saturday night's annual Firemen Awards ceremony held at the Community Building, Robbie Forrester was named “Fireman of the Year.” Chief James Manley said picking the winner is always tough because “everyone is ‘Fireman of the Year,’” but Forrester's fellow firefighters picked him. Pictured is Manley, Forrester and Assistant Chief Ryan Gearhart.

Photo by Jim Lewicki

DC trip eye-opening and fun for Highlands students

By Ryan Potts

Forty-eight Highlands High School students and six Highlands School teachers traveled to Washington DC last weekend on a three-day tour of the nation's capital. The trip was open to all Highlands High School students on a first come, first serve basis and provided an opportunity to tour the White House, Capitol Building, many of the DC

monuments and General George Washington's home of Mount Vernon.

The tour group departed late Friday evening in a charter bus and drove overnight to Washington, where they arrived at the White House early Saturday morning. Many of the students were im-

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County sends 'priorities' to Raleigh

Macon County's voice may be a cry in the wilderness but that only means commissioners need to scream loud enough for Raleigh to hear.

At the Tuesday, Jan. 11, Macon County commission meeting, Commissioner Ronnie Beale, who is the Health & Human Services Steering Committee Chair on the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC), outlined the top five priority goals he and the other Western North Carolina county liaisons are sending to legislators for consideration this year.

Dear to Beale's heart is the state of mental health in Western North Carolina so “Ensuring Adequate Mental Health Funding” was first on his list, but it tied as number one with “Oppose the Shift of State Transportation Responsibilities to Counties.”

Beale said concerning mental health, the NCACC will seek legislation to ensure adequate capacity of state-funded acute psychiatric beds; oppose legislation to close state-funded beds until there is ad-

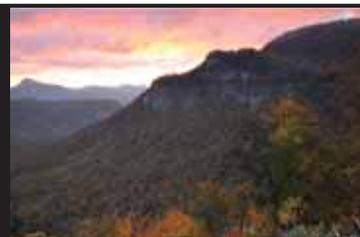
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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• LETTERS •

Fred, are you doing fuzzy math or fuzzy thinking about gays in the military?

Dear Editor,

In Fred Wooldrige's Jan. 13 column, he posed the rhetorical question of why should 98% of us have to adjust to 2% of the population, the latter being his estimate of gay people in the general population. That statement gave me pause to reflect on what he was saying.

His notion that openly gay soldiers could affect the combat effectiveness of the military, implies our fighting force is in a very vulnerable situation.

If I follow his numbers, 2% of soldiers in a combat company of 200 soldiers could undercut the whole unit. That means just four gay soldiers, even if they were committed professionals, could disrupt the entire unit.

Now perhaps his argument is based on the supposition that there will be an onslaught of homosexuals rushing to join combat units, an overwhelming 2%? If that is the case, then terrorists don't need to attack our forces overseas in combat. Osama should just get his people to come to America, infiltrate the US military and pose as openly gay soldiers. I can see it now, a gay impersonation training camp in the mountains of Afghanistan. Coupled with the already serving homosexuals, our military effectiveness according to him may collapse.

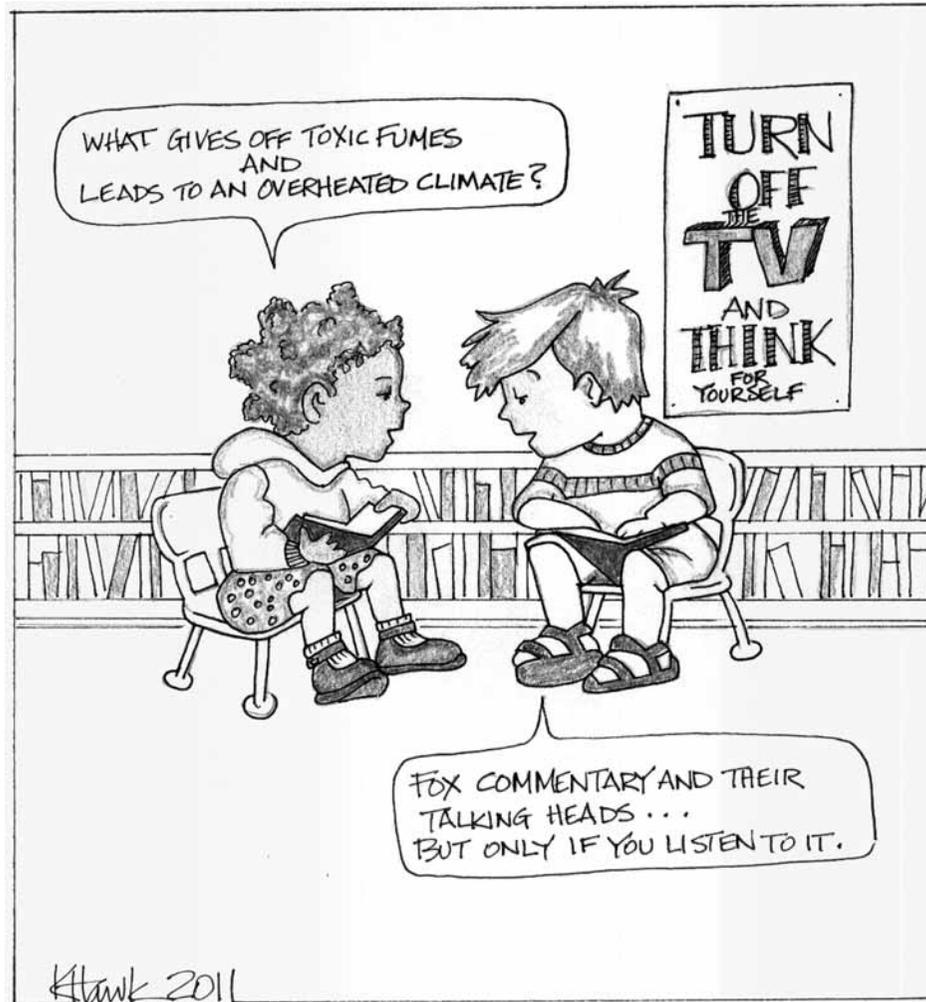
Oh Fred, have you unknowingly revealed top secret information about our military vulnerability to the enemy? For the sake of the nation, I sure hope your math and thinking are both fuzzy.

We have heard versions of his concerns before. In World War II, folks in power worried that black people couldn't serve effectively in combat units. When they did serve with distinction, i.e. the Tuskegee Airmen, those same people ignored the truth until years later. In Vietnam, the performance of black soldiers in combat blew that racist notion out of the water.

In the 1970s and 1980s we had the heated debate concerning full participation of women in the military. The first Gulf War and the current conflict confirm that full participation of women was a good and correct decision. I recall there were folks back then that also de-

•See LETTER page 16

• HAWK'S EYE VIEW •



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 Monday at 5 p.m. There is a 500-word limit without prior approval.

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• LETTERS •

Fred is way off base

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to Fred Wooldrige's column in the Jan. 13 issue entitled "Don't ask don't yell ... I mean tell - I'm about to get in big trouble."

The sub-headline was "I'm about to get in big trouble" and I'm writing to let him know he's right. He is in BIG trouble with me. His remarks were way off base. Servicemen who are gay will always have the option of keeping their sexual preferences to themselves, as does any service man have the option of not discussing his sexual predilections.

The new ruling is a step in the direction of reducing or eliminating the special negative status of those who self-identify as gay, against whom punitive actions such as failure to promote, recognize heroic behaviors, or even dismissal could occur simply because it was revealed that they were gay. They might reveal it to a friend, be overheard, and end up in a discriminatory action against them.

Fred's examples of not wanting a physician who he learned was gay to be perform a vasectomy or a circumcision on him is rather absurd logic. By the same reasoning, no woman would want to go to a male heterosexual gynecologist. Does he think sexual issues are always at the foreground of a professional's mind?

Anti-gay feeling is a prejudice that leads to discriminatory treatment. The prejudices of individuals may not be diminished through rules and regulations, but it ought not be perpetuated by a branch of the United States government in its policies.

Carole S. Light, Ph.D.
Highlands

Wannabees still don't get it

Dear Editor,

I'm writing in response to Ms. Bell's letter in the Jan. 13th issue entitled "Another local's take on bear hunting and other issues."

I appreciate that Ms. Bell appreciated my letter in the Jan. 6th issue, but apparently the point that I was trying to make went right over her head. It wasn't about fashion! So let me spell this out for her.

She may come to these mountains, kick off her city slickers, put on her overalls, hat, and boots; whatever her little heart desires. She has that right — never said she didn't! It's the attitude and the actions she

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• OBITUARY •

Robert Miller Smies

Robert Miller Smies, who was born in Lakewood, Ohio, passed away in Needham, Massachusetts on Wednesday, January 12, 2011, at the age of 99 in the loving care of his cousin Shelly Henderson of Newton, MA.

He was the son of George Henry and Lillian Madeline Tuefel Smies, and was predeceased by his only sibling, his brother George Tuefel Smies. Robert will be buried in Lakewood, Ohio with his parents.

A ceremony to celebrate his life was held in Stockbridge, MA, near his assisted living home and where he is survived by his cousin, Aleva Henderson.

Robert served in WWII and was stationed at the Army Air Force base in Reno, NV. He worked for the East Ohio Gas Company his entire career. Robert was retired for more than



40 years in Highlands, NC, where he was supported by a very loving community until the age of 98. This love and support is a very great tribute to the character of the Highlands community.

Although Robert never married, he was loved by a large extended family of friends. He was known for his piano playing, his automobile touring, and his enchanting personality. Robert was most proud in his life of being a Mason and

was a member of the Blue Ridge Lodge No. 435. In October, Robert received his 60-year service pin from the Masons.

At Robert's request, donations can be made in his memory to the Shriner's Hospital for Children, Attention: Donations, 12502 USF Pine Drive, Tampa, FL 33612, or alternatively by phone at 800 241-4438.

... LETTERS continued from page 2

takes when doing so that I take offense to. It's the attitude that now she's a mountaineer and she knows all about these mountains and the creatures and the people in it; their way of life and what is best for us all and it's her way or no way.

No matter what kind of clothing a person puts on, it doesn't make the person who he or she is or pretends to be. But words and actions do. Please take the time to read back on Ms. Bell's letter and notice how many times she stated "I have heard" or "someone told me" or "hunters I heard about." This is where people are proven to be a "wannabe."

Growing up in and around this little mountain town, we learned at an early age not to believe anything unless there were at least two other witnesses to prove what is said or done is true or false. Unless you have seen it with your own eyes and know it to be true, don't write it up as truth and don't repeat it and open up a big can of worms with it. This would be known as gossip. Gossip is created by those who have no life and therefore have the need to create a little drama — drama that Ms. Bell can keep in her little town in Georgia rather than interfering in the way were living our lives when she moved in here with us and the bears.

Judging from Ms. Bell's letter, I'm now certain that she doesn't know anything for sure about anything on this bear issue (drama) she has created.

She describes bears as "scary and photogenic." We describe them all differently. Some we call "nature bears." They forage on the natural foods that the forest pro-

vides. Roaming around eating acorns and berries and who will run at the sight, smell or sound of man. They stay clear of us and we're careful to stay clear of them while they do — what bears should do.

Then there are the "nuisance bears" fed from the homes' trash and bird feeders and associating food with people and houses. They know no fear of man and can become more aggressive than you can even imagine if you get between them and the food source. Nothing will stop them from coming across a six-foot chain link fence, attack your dogs and come right on into your home when they smell chicken being cooked for dinner.

Ms. Bell doesn't have a clue as to what a service our hunters have provided for us over the years and still are providing. Being raised with three other siblings and no work at all in Highlands at that time we had to live off the land and learned to appreciate bear hunters for running those bears away from our corn crops and livestock. Being the bears' only predator, hunters kept the population thinned down to where they didn't have to compete for food and starve or attack people and eat us! And yes, when cooked correctly, the meat is better than beef and was shared by the hunters and was one of the many animals God put on this earth to fill our little bellies.

I've helped process the hamburger, sausage and hotdogs that she spoke of as well, but my appetite hasn't been suppressed, yet. I still enjoy it all and count my blessings for having it so she really shouldn't be speak-

• See LETTERS page 13

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...on this day from the History Guy

Jan 20, 1920

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• LAUGHING AT LIFE •

Puss in Boots

(Have tissues handy when you read this)

No, no, no, this is not a story about Sarah Palin; shame on you.

This is my version of an old, French tale about a devious, sneaky cat (aren't they all?) who wore boots and a stupid hat. It was written by Charles Perrault way back in 1697.

I must warn you, I'm not a cat person nor have I ever been owned by a cat. They're much too sneaky for me. Besides, I find it extremely distasteful when they climb up on the kitchen counter and cough up hairballs in one's dinner preparation. I never eat in a home with cats. That strange looking thing in your soup could be a hairball and not a dumpling. Yuck!

Anyway, in the original version of *Puss in Boots*, ole Puss, aka, The Master Cat, used trickery and deceit to gain power and wealth. No, no, no, wrong again, cat-breath, this is not about Barack Obama. God only knows where that guy's ancestors were in 1697. Actually, we don't wanna know, do we?

In the book, Puss used trickery and deceit to gain the affection of an awesome, knock-your-socks-off hot French babe princess so he could win her hand in marriage for his low life, very ugly, not so smart, bucktoothed master who had bad breath.

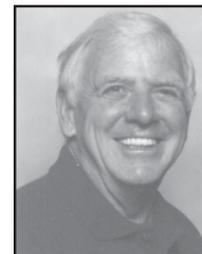
Actually, during this era, everyone in France had bad breath, but that's another story. In the book version, ole Puss was in complete control of his master's mind, using trickery and deceit to manipulate him. (Ha, I'm certainly not going there.)

So let's get started.

Once upon a time, there was a homeless pussycat living on the streets of New York City who survived by her wits. Staying far away from Chinese restaurants, she found enough to eat in garbage dumpsters and occasional handouts from passing cat lovers.

Then one day this kitty came in heat and, as a result, had a small army of very horny toms following her around, serenading her and trying to win her over.

That afternoon, on her first day in heat, she got cornered in the vestibule of a Manhattan shoe store by four toms wanting to have their way with her. (This means they wanted to jump her bones and play hide



Fred Wooldridge

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the sausage.) She was doomed. Please, if your name is Tom, don't take offense. This is not about you. Anyway, most people I know named Tom have no sex drive anyway.

A wealthy, attractive woman trying on boots (ah ha) in the shoe store, witnessed the sexual catfight. Since it was four toms against one li'l ole puss, the poor cat couldn't win. The

woman raced out and rescued it from her attackers. As she returned to her seat with the cat in her arms, the owner of the shoe store informed her that animals were not permitted in the store. (This is where the plot thickens. Are you falling asleep?)

When the store owner wasn't looking, the woman shoved the kitty into a boot she had been trying on. The cat was soooo happy to be away from those dastardly toms, she curled up in the toe of the boot, began to purr and eventually fell asleep. (Everyone, now, "Ahhhh.") When the woman saw this, she became overwhelmed with joy and thought, "This was meant to be. I'll call my new pet "Puss" like the cat in that stupid book. I'll take Puss home to live with me forever." OK, break out the tissues.

The woman carefully placed the boots back in the box and closed it. "I'll take these," she announced to the store clerk. She carefully watched the clerk ring up the transaction, eventually putting the shoebox in a store bag. The woman left the store pleased she had, like ole Puss, deceived the clerk. In the book, Puss deceived the ogre, convincing him to turn himself into a mouse so Puss could eat it. (I hope you're seeing a correlation here, 'cause I'm not.)

When the woman got home, she opened the shoebox and found that ole Puss had croaked, suffocated from lack of oxygen. OK, more tissues, please, especially if you're a cat person. If not, you may shed tears of joy, knowing there are only six billion stray cats left on the planet. Sad, sad, sad, but remember; no good deed goes unpunished.

PS - If you wish to have my story published, call me at 1-800-get lost.

Read Fred's column on-line all winter at www.highlandsinfo.com, click on LOCAL NEWS.

• THE VIEW FROM HERE •

Young people are changing how we see 'color' in America

Back in the 80s, two guys, Magic Johnson and Larry Bird resuscitated the National Basketball League. There may be someone out there who doesn't know that Bird is white and Johnson black. Johnson played for the Los Angeles Lakers and Bird for the Boston Celtics.

The league's salvation was that the two best players played for the two fiercest rivals. If Johnson was a magician, Bird was an eagle. I

didn't know a single black guy who rooted for the Celtics, or one white who cheered for the Lakers. It just wasn't done. Sports writers dubbed the Celtics workmanlike and blue collar. It meant they worked harder, did more with less, and overcame grace with determination, athleticism with resilience. The Lakers were "showtime," high-flying athletes who displayed amazing grace and agility. Their wins seemed effortless, a result of physical supremacy. There was a widely reproduced painting which showed a little black boy and a little white boy standing together, backs to the artist. Both wore oversized jerseys that hung to their knees. The blond kid was wearing Larry Bird's white home jersey. His friend, the black kid, was wearing Johnson's.

That's how it was back then. I think Dr. Martin Luther King would be proud of the progress we've made. It's the kids who are leading the way. A lot of adults still see a turncoat when they see a white kid wearing a Kobe Bryant jersey. Kids hang out with other kids. Color is unimportant. I can't believe kids are color blind. They see skin color in the same way they see height and



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body build, or hair and eye color. It just isn't important. Bull would be just as unlikely to reject a kid because he's black as because he was a red head. Blacks have made tremendous progress since the days of Larry and Magic, more since the days when Dr. King was preaching his message of social justice. Our President is an African American. Colin Powell, among the most respected Americans, was Chairman of

Gulf war, developed the Powell Doctrine, and later served as Secretary of State. Blacks participate in every facet of American life. No door is closed.

While there have been many gains, far too many black Americans have been left behind. I believe Dr. King would agree that African Americans must accept considerably responsibility for that sad fact.

Reasons are complex and the explanations plentiful, but black Americans must stay in school, form stable families, reduce teen pregnancies, and reject drugs and those who distribute them.

Fourteen-year-old mothers will rarely find their way to corporate board rooms, except as cleaning ladies. Of course, prejudice still exists in America. Electing Barack Obama or admitting Tiger Woods to Augusta National can't obscure that reality.

The President will stand for reelection in 2012. He will face a stiff challenge. Unless the economy improves dramatically in the next two years, he will lose. But he won't be defeated because he is black, and that is all any of us can ask.

... PRIORITIES continued from page 1

equate capacity statewide; seek legislation to maintain the existing levels of state funding for community mental health services.

"The bed cut-off represents a huge cost to the county," said Beale. "The county's east of us get privileges and it needs to be equal across the state."

The tying number one priority involves opposing legislation to shift the state's responsibility for funding transportation construction and maintenance projects to counties.

The next priority is to "Reinstate the Average Daily Membership (ADM) funds and Lottery proceeds to the Public School Building Capital Fund."

Commissioners said this was supposed to be a given when the Lottery was proposed and accepted, but as they state fell into more

and more fiscal despair, lottery monies were averted.

The next priority is to "Preserve the Existing Local Revenue Base."

The final priority is to "Authorize Local Revenue Options by Seeking Legislation to allow all counties to enact by resolution or, at the option of the Boards of Commissioners, by voter referendum any or all revenue options from among those that have been authorized for any other county."

Again, counties in the east have been allowed those options; counties in Western North Carolina have not.

In the past, the first couple of priorities get the most attention, so commissioners are hoping for the best.

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• JUST HERS •

'I'm glad I'm not young anymore'

I don't know why I thought of that song. Maybe it was the cold; maybe it was the snow. Don't get me wrong. I love snow. In the back of my mind, I keep thinking there'll come a time when the child in me won't say, "Oh, cool! It's snowing! Yeah!" But, no, those first flakes start coming down, and it still makes me want to run outside and dance in the street. Of course, with time the snow gets dirty and yucky, especially in town or the city. My friend, Barbara, introduced me to the word "snirt," which is the combination of snow and dirt. There's a lot of snirt around now, but looking out my bay window, and seeing those huge flakes floating down was absolutely magical.

The cats have discovered the bay window, as I hoped they would. At first, every noise in the street terrified them, and they would run under the bed to hide. Gradually, they ventured out of their lair, and

claimed the arm chair. Finally, they graduated from the arm chair to the bay window, where they watch the world go by. Orion and Weasel still think the garbage trucks are noisy, and they're not so sure about dogs, but all and all, they find the window seat entertaining. As for me, I sit on the sofa reading or watching TV. The sight of a lazy cat sunning itself, completely lost in the moment, is a comforting one.

Weasel has discovered the Animal Planet channel. While she's a fan of animal rescue shows, she does get upset when she hears other cats in distress. She puts her ears back, and scowls. Orion, a huge Law & Order fan, has just discovered Sex & the City. As with Law & Order, he recognizes the theme music, and wakes up to follow the show. Having lived in New York City for 11 years, I recognize many of the locations, so Orion has someone to explain them to him. Still, I don't think they make

Manolo Blahnik's in his paw size, or in Weasel's either, for that matter.

When I was a little girl, someone asked me how old I wanted to be. "Old enough to do what I want!" was my reply. "No one gets that old," my mother quipped. Why is it that you spend your childhood wanting to be older, and the rest of your life wanting to be younger? Well, I don't want to be younger anymore. I'm OK just where I am. Just think of all the things I've learned along the way.

- I get a kick out of all those make-over programs where women clutch at the locks, and wail when the hairdresser comes at them with their shears. Hair? No big deal. At 60, I've finally figured out the great truth. It grows back, folks.

- It is no longer my lot to stew in silence when people are rude and inconsiderate. I've realized that a bolt of lightning does not strike you dead when you fight back. Really.

- This one's a biggy. When people tell lies about you, it says more about them than it does about you.

- It's OK to say you're not particularly religious. The world has enough hypocrites. Don't be one more.

- Most people don't care what you eat. Bragging about surviving on two lettuce leaves with a lemon squeezed over them doesn't impress anyone. Don't make a virtue of starving yourself.

- You don't have to be cool, fashionable, or trendy. It's OK to be square, traditional, and comfortable. Town & Country, In Style, and Vogue are probably not coming over for a photo shoot any time this week.

- There are two kinds of people – the people who make you feel better when you spend time with them, and the people who make you feel worse. Which kind do you think people want to hang around with?

- The crushing insult you've been planning for weeks to deliver seldom feels as good as you think it will.

- Upon reflection, I've had more regrets over the good things I didn't do than the bad things I did.

- Be the saint that replaces the empty roll. You know what I'm talking about. Don't pretend you don't. And it goes under, not over. Period.

- Don't feel guilty about guilty pleasures. It's OK to read the National Inquirer, watch TV programs where people fall on their faces, and eat food straight from the containers, in the privacy of your own



Michelle Mead-Armor
michiemead@aol.com

home. I repeat, in the privacy of your own home.

- Don't take yourself more seriously than other people do.

- Sexual orientation, whatever yours is, is not particularly interesting to other people. It's not so much a case of "Don't ask, don't tell" as "Don't kiss and tell."

- Giving a cruel child a pet does not create a sensitive, caring child. It creates a helpless victim.

- Being cute is over-rated. Being on time is not.

Next time the winter weather gets you down, get on your computer, pull up YouTube, and type in "I'm Glad I'm Not Young Anymore." Many people have recorded this marvelous song, but Maurice Chevalier's version is still the best – mais oui!

Come on! Join me for the last verse. Here we go:

The Fountain of Youth is dull as paint
Methuselah is my patron saint
I've never been so comfortable before
Oh, I'm so glad that I'm not young anymore.

- About the Author: Michelle A. Mead-Armor is a writer and translator who grew up in Waynesboro, Virginia, before wasting her youth and good looks in Baltimore, Sydney, Paris, and New York. She moved to Highlands several years ago to live on top of a mountain on the Continental divide near Highlands with her precious husband, author and attorney, John C. Armor, and two very spoiled cats. Michelle thinks that, if we are lucky, with age comes wisdom - although there are still some dumb old people out there. And while she is more comfortable in her own skin, she wishes there wasn't quite so much of it.

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The Town of Highlands is taking applications for the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee.

Applications are available at Town Hall, the Parks and Recreation Department, or online at

http://www.highlandsonc.org/Forms/app_boards_committee_fillable.pdf

• CONSERVATIVE POV •

Where do we go from here?

"First they ignore you, then they ridicule you, then they fight you, then you win."

I wish I could lay claim to that brilliant line, but in truth, it came from a surprising source. Give up? Mahatma Gandhi. Hoodathunk?

It was recently used to describe the short life of the Tea Party movement. Drawing on the writings of Dick Armey, I thought a walk down memory lane would be timely.

Two years ago, fiscal conservatism looked dead. We watched in horror as politicians from both parties abandoned the free market, tore up the Constitution and spent trillions of dollars in borrowed money, while we drowned in debt. Individual freedom, it seemed, would forever be relinquished in the name of big government.

The 2008 financial crisis tested America's commitment to capitalism, whether to allow the market to work or cave under political pressure. Written in the waning days of the Bush presidency, Congress' Wall Street Bailout proved that

the establishment politicians would pursue the latter, ushering in the largest government take over of the private economy in American history.

Grassroots outrage against the bailouts was then amplified when newly elected President Obama proposed a "stimulus plan," a government pork barrel spending project unseen since the days of FDR.

On the floor of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, Rick Santelli, in his now famous "rant heard 'round the world" declared that government was promoting bad behavior and that capitalists needed to mobilize for another Boston Tea Party.

But then something remarkable happened. Citizens took to the streets and demanded answers from this arrogant, out of touch political elite. Many had never been involved in politics before, yet they knew the stakes. Bailouts, takeovers and runaway spending threatened to lead us down a path of government control, which



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

would spell the end of our uniquely American commitment to liberty.

Concerned citizens stood up and were ignored. Rejecting the will of the American people, Obama pressed on with his next spending spree: a government takeover of health care. Tea Party activists were urged to challenge their representatives at town halls, igniting a media firestorm during the August recess of

2009. And the people rose to the challenge. As Samuel Adams often said, "It does not require a majority to prevail, but rather an irate, tireless minority, keen to set brush fires in people's minds."

Starting to feel the heat, the liberals, aided by the media, ridiculed the efforts of the people. They called this movement fake grassroots or "Astroturf." They called the town hall protests against ObamaCare "manufactured outrage." Only spurred on by their taunts, hundreds of thousands of activists came to Washington DC on September 12, 2009 and stood united with one clear message: "Can you hear us now?" They heard when Scott Brown, backed by the Tea Party, won Teddy Kennedy's Senate seat in normally ultraliberal Massachusetts in January, 2010. The fight was on.

And then we won, at least a battle, if not yet the war. The Tea Party movement's grassroots energy defined the historic midterm elections, ushering in a landslide for fiscal conservative candidates

throughout the country. It was a stunning blow to the Obama agenda, a Tea Party surge which allowed Republicans to retake the House of Representatives and fire Nancy Pelosi as Speaker.

"Now we must govern!" A lofty ambition, but how do "we" do that? While we are limited to actually voting, except in elections, we have proven to have a profound effect on those who make the laws that govern our lives. There can be no doubt that the activities of our elected officials must be monitored and that they need to be held accountable. The Founders knew that, and knowing that, left to their own devices, they will invariably go astray.

Look at what happened over the last 60 years, while we were busy being too busy to watch the store. Social Security Trust funds were raided, causing the deep pit of unfunded obligations facing us today. Highway Trust funds are constantly being abused as are other special purpose funds, leaving the need with nothing to fix it. Elected officials are human, subject to human foibles and can't be left alone to their own devices. They will mess up at nearly every opportunity.

Like undisciplined teenagers, they must be watched, guided, prodded, scolded and threatened with being fired at election time to keep them in line, doing the job they were hired to do. Phone calls to their offices, emails, too, letters are particularly effective, letters-to-the-editor are good. Stay informed, stay involved, stay diligent. The future of America depends on you and me.

The 'State of Macon County's Health' report 2010

By **Becky Barr**

Health Education Supervisor
Macon County Public Health

Macon County Public Health and Macon County Healthy Carolinians are pleased to issue Macon County's State of the County's Health Report for 2010.

This report informs community members, leaders, organizations and others about Macon County's progress on certain health issues. It also provides the most current data on a number of leading health indicators such as: county demographics, leading causes of death, chronic disease mortality, injury prevention, access to care, maternal and child health, and health promotion.

The State of the County Health Report, or SOTCH report as it is commonly known, highlights both the county's progress and barriers during the year in relation to health priorities identified in the 2007 comprehensive Community Health Assessment. The report compares Macon County residents to four peer counties (counties with similar population and demographic characteristics) and the state as a whole to see what areas could be improved upon. The report also celebrates the accomplishments of local collaborations and coalitions that have made an impact on Macon County's health through chronic disease prevention and ac-

cess to care.

Positive highlights noted in the report include:

• See HEALTH page 9

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• COACH'S CORNER •

Highlands School basketball game revised schedule

Jan. 29 at Nantahala (Jan. 7th game)
 Feb. 3 at Hiwassee Dam (Jan. 5th game).
 The Jan. 8 game with Rabun Gap has not been rescheduled.

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Ryan Potts
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This year New York Jets coach Rex Ryan has been called a lot of things. Brash, arrogant, boorish, obscene, profane are all adjectives that have been used to describe the second year coach. However, Ryan doesn't seem to mind all of the "accolades" that have been thrown his way, mainly because while he has been taking all of the media heat in the city that never sleeps, his J-E-T-S, Jets, Jets, Jets have been winning ball games. Consider this amazing statistic before you bristle at the thought of praising one of the loudest mouths the game has seen...the Jets are now 4-1 in the playoffs under Ryan, and all 4 of those wins have been on the road.

4-1 on the road in the playoffs...amazing when you consider that the road is where teams go to die in the playoffs. Look at my New Orleans Saints, who were 11-5 and looked poised for a deep playoff run. Their defense was swallowed up by the noise of Qwest Field, and the 7-9 Seattle Seahawks beat them. This weekend Seattle traveled to Soldier Field where they were destroyed by a decent Bears team that had a hot crowd behind them. But while road stadiums have been hell for visiting teams, the Jets have been nonplussed by hostile environments, and have played their best when the stakes are the highest.

Perhaps the biggest reason for that is Ryan (no, that is not a fat joke either) who came up with another masterful game plan

that stifled a New England offense that had scored 45 points against them just a few weeks earlier. Ryan eschewed his normal blitzing style in favor of playing zone coverage and only rushing 4 or 5 men. This strategy confused future Hall of Fame quarterback Tom Brady as he time and again surveyed the field only to find no openings. With the lead-footed Brady no threat to run, the Jets were able to cover long enough to allow their front four to get to Brady, which they did to the tune of 5 sacks and several big hits.

Despite my misgivings about Ryan's big mouth in the media, there are two things that I admire greatly about him. First and foremost, his players love playing for him, which doesn't happen often at any level (just ask the high school players) but especially not at the highest level where players are making millions of dollars. Secondly, Ryan has shown an ability to back up his words on the field, and he has done so in arguably the toughest crowd in America. I mean, the New York

Media drummed up some sex scandal that Rex was having...with his own wife! To me, that is amazing in and of itself, but it speaks to the difficulties of living in New York

With the Jets one win from the Super Bowl, it will be interesting to see if ol' Rex can get the job done one more time — and this time it will be on the road against the Steelers.

Tune in this weekend and see if the mouth of the north and his boys can get it done once again.

Highlands School calendar changes

- Friday, Jan. 21, is now a regular school day.
 - Saturday, Jan. 22, is now a school day from 8am to 11:30 am.
 - Monday, Jan. 24, is now a school day from 8am to 2 pm.
 - Monday, Jan. 24, through Friday, Jan. 28, is now semester exam week. School will be in session from 8 am to 2 pm each day that week.
 - Friday, Jan. 28, is now the last day of the first semester.
 - Monday, Jan. 31, is now a teacher workday, student holiday.
 - Report Cards will now be sent home Wednesday, Feb. 2.
 - Monday, Feb. 14, is now a regular school day.
 - Friday, June 10, is now a regular school day.
- There is still one missed day (1/12/11) that must be made up. That date will be announced soon.

• HS SPORTS •

Highlanders split with Rosman in 2011 opener

By Ryan Potts

After battling winter weather conditions for two weeks, the Highlands Highlanders finally opened up the second half of their basketball season on Tuesday night against Smoky Mountain Conference foe Rosman.

The girls game was a rematch of a game that the Lady Highlanders dominated over in Rosman in early December, and things looked headed for the same result Tuesday as the Lady Highlanders jumped out to an early lead against the Lady Tigers in the first half.

Despite opening up an early margin of 8 points, the Lady Highlanders were unable to pull away and left the door open for a Tiger comeback. Rosman continued to chip away at the Highlands lead until late in the fourth when they took the lead for good on a three-pointer from the wing. Despite playing with plenty of effort, the Lady Highlanders could not find the range late in the fourth and ended up falling 52 to 47. Taylor Buras led the Lady Highlanders with 13 points and Emily Munger added 12.

The Highlanders came out from the long

break looking to avenge a thrilling overtime loss to the Tigers back in December, but things did not look good early as the Highlanders struggled to score points, managing only 2 points in the first 5 minutes of the game.

However, the return of senior Michael Shearl seemed to energize the Highlanders when he entered the game late in the 1st quarter. Shearl, who missed the first half of the season with a broken fibula, nailed two threes from the wing to close out the 1st quarter and bolster the Highlanders hopes.

The Highlanders took a narrow 2 point lead into the half, but blew the game wide open in the third quarter, scoring 23 unanswered points and suffocating the Tigers on defense. Shearl and Robbie Vanderbilt both scored 9 points for Highlands in the 57-29 blowout victory, and Clayton Lassiter grabbed 11 rebounds for Highlands.

The Highlanders will travel to Swain County Friday night and will host Hayesville in Highlands on Saturday.



Robbie Vanderbilt at Rosman.

Photo by Noel Atherton

• HEALTH MATTERS •

Why Floss?

By Joseph Wilbanks

A study completed a couple of years ago found that less than half of Americans floss daily and 10% NEVER floss. Flossing is even more important than brushing when it comes to preventing gum disease and future tooth loss. Dentists have a saying – Only floss the teeth you want to keep!

People have lots of excuses for not flossing.

- Food doesn't get stuck between my teeth so I don't have to. Flossing isn't just about getting that popcorn kernel unstuck. It is about removing dental plaque, the bacteria that forms colonies on your teeth in between cleanings. Plaque causes bad breath, gum disease, tooth decay and eventual tooth loss.

- I'm not coordinated enough to floss. While using a nice long strand of dental floss is best, the people who use this excuse find



Dr. Joseph Wilbanks

that floss picks are just the thing. Floss picks are sold at dollar stores, drug stores and supermarkets and consist of a little piece of floss on a handy plastic handle. Keep a pack in the car and you can floss at stoplights!

- It hurts when I floss. If flossing causes pain or if you see blood on the floss you probably already have gum disease — which is exactly why you need to floss more than ever before.

When you are brushing and flossing on a regular basis the gum pain and bleeding should stop within a few days. If they don't then you need to call your dentist.

- The floss shreds in my mouth. If the floss is getting stuck or shredding between certain teeth you probably have old dental work that is failing and needs to be replaced. Mention the areas where you are having problems with floss on your next visit. You may just need a simple fix to end the shreds.

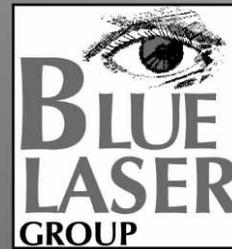
Even if you have braces or bridgework you can still floss using floss threaders. Ask your dentist or hygienist to show you how at your next appointment.

For additional information about

flossing and gum disease and to schedule your dental hygiene appointment please contact your Toccoa, Georgia area full-service dentist, Dr. Joseph Wilbanks at 706-886-9439. Keep flossing!

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...HEALTH continued from page 7

- * The Franklin Community Care Clinic opened in February, 2010; improving access to health care for low income and uninsured residents.

- * Self-reported data collected from youth indicated improvements in tobacco use initiation, consumption of fruits, and cocaine and inhalant use.

- * The rate (per 1000) of teen pregnancies (ages 15 - 19) dropped from 59.6 in 2006 to 53.4 by the end of 2009.

- * Body mass index (BMI) trends were favorable when measured at Macon County elementary school health fairs.

- * Macon County's rates for bacteria positive well water samples fell from 70% in July, 2008 to less than 30% in July, 2010 due to improvements in chlorination practices.

Issues noted in the report indicating opportunities for further improvement included:

- * More than half of Macon County deaths between 2005 and 2009 were due to chronic diseases such as cancer and heart disease.

- * Macon County's death rates attributable to unintentional injury and suicide were significantly higher than the state's rates.

- * The latest available data on maternal smoking showed that Macon County's percent of live births where the mother smoked was 22.3%; more than double the state's rate of 11%.

- * The 75 and older population growth rate is exceeding the growth rate of health care services in the community.

In 2011, Macon County Public Health will conduct a new comprehensive Community Health Assessment. This assessment will

be used to establish long-term health priorities for Macon County. It will also be used as the standard for measuring progress in future State of the County Health Reports. The Community Health Assessment will be conducted using many data collection techniques, including telephone interviews, focus groups, key informant surveys, as well as statistical analysis.

Macon County Public Health values the public's input, questions, and comments about the SOTCH report as well as the Community Assessment process. To access current and historical SOTCH reports and CHA reports, please visit <http://www.maconnc.org/healthy-carolinians.html> or contact Becky Barr at 349-2437 for more information.

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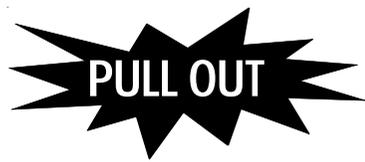
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On going and Upcoming Events

Ongoing

• At Health Tracks at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, various exercise classes all week long. Call 828-526-1FIT.

Mon. & Thurs.

• On the Mat Yoga at the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation on Main Street. Upper Level Jones Hall. Mon., and Thurs. at 10:45 a.m. Bring your mat. 828-482-2128. \$10/hour. (12/31)

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 \$50 a month.

Mondays

• Closed AA meeting, 5:30 p.m. at the Episco-

pal Church at Fifth and Main streets.

Tuesdays

• 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.

Tues. & Thurs.

• Study Hall at the Literacy Council of Highlands in the Peggy Crosby Center from 3 to 5 p.m. Come do your homework, projects use the resources on site and get help from a tutor. For more information, contact Faviola Olvera at (828) 526-0925.

Wednesdays

• 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 & Fridays

• 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.

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.

Saturdays

• At Paoletti's Restaurant, intimate Wine Tasting at the bar at 1 pm. Great inexpensive wines from around the world, available for retail sales daily. Cheese and Crackers are served. Cost: \$20 per person refundable with case purchase.

• At Cyprus International Restaurant, live music beginning at 9 p.m. No cover.

Sat., Jan. 22

• At The Bascom, Winter Barn Dance honoring educators from 7-10 p.m. Tickets are \$5. Call the Chamber of Commerce at 526-2112 for more information.

Thursday, Jan. 20

• Taize in Highlands, 5:30 at Our Lady of the Mountain Catholic Church.

Sunday, Jan. 23

Pizza dinner to benefit the Highlands Bolivian Mission fundraiser from 1-8 p.m. We deliver. Call 526-3376. Large Cheese with two toppings \$25; Three or more toppings, \$35. Choose from extra cheese cheddar, mozzarella, or provolone, mushrooms, green peppers, onions, black olives, beef, pepperoni, sausage, bacon, jalapenos.

Tuesday, Jan. 25

• Macon County Public Library Blood Drive, 149 Siler Farm Road, Franklin, 10 am to 7 pm. Please call 524-3600 for more information or to schedule an appointment. Walk-Ins Welcome! Appointments preferred. *All presenting donors have a chance to win one of two pairs of Delta Air Lines tickets!*

• Western style square dance lessons begin on Tuesday from 6-8 P.M. at Highlands Civic Center. The 10 classes will be taught by professional caller/instructor Jim Duncan. Join Highlands Drifters for hours of fun and exercise for only \$65!

Fri. & Sat., Jan. 28-29

• At The Bascom, Photography for Lovers with Greg Newington. for more information, call 526-4949.

Saturday, Jan. 29

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 5-mile hike to Siler Bald via the old

Appalachian Trail, returning on the new AT at Big Stamp with some wandering around by the shelter and the road to the crest. Meet in Franklin at Westgate Plaza, opposite Burger King, at 10:00 a.m.; Drive 24 miles round trip. Bring water, lunch, wear sturdy shoes. Call leader Gail Lehman at 524-5298 for reservations. Visitors are welcome, but no pets please.

• Otto Community Blood Drive at the Otto Community Center from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Call Phyllis Castle at 524-9307 to make your donation appointment. Walk-ins welcome, however. Bring photo ID. All presenting donors will be automatically entered into a drawing for a chance to win one of three, three-night oceanfront vacation rentals at The Islander Suites on Emerald Isle!

Sunday, Jan. 30

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 1.5 mile hike on the Little Tennessee River Greenway in Franklin. Meet at Macon Co. Library at 2 PM. Bring water, a snack if you wish; wear sturdy shoes. Call leader Call Kay Coriell at 369-6820 for reservations. Visitors and children ten or older are welcome but no pets please.

Monday, Jan. 31

• "Beyond the Birds and Bees" at Mountain View Intermediate School Media Center. Have you ad your children had "The Talk?" Let Dr. Douglas Egge of Peadiatric Assocites of Franklin, help! Girls' Program 6-7:30 p.m. Boys Program 7:45-9 p.m. Registration is required as space is limited. Call 524-3314.

Friday, Feb. 4

• American Red Cross Blood Drive at Lowe's of Franklin, Georgia Highway, Franklin, 9:30 am to 2 pm. Please call 349-4654 for more information or to schedule an appointment. Walk-Ins Welcome, appointments preferred! Donors are encouraged to donate as soon as weather and travel conditions permit. There is a special need for type O and type B blood donors. *All presenting donors have a chance to win one of two pairs of Delta Air Lines tickets!*

Sunday, Feb. 6

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 1-mile hike in Black Rock Mt. State Park in GA on an easy loop trail around Taylor Lake plus a visit to the overlook above Clayton. Bring water, a snack if you wish; wear sturdy shoes. Meet at Smoky Mountains Visitors' Center in Otto at 2 pm; drive 26 miles round trip. Call leader Kay Coriell at 369-6820 for reservations or alternate meeting place if coming from Highlands, Cashiers, or Clayton. Visitors and children ten or older are welcome but no pets please.

Saturday, Feb. 12

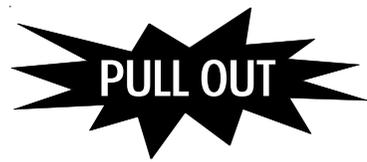
• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 4.6 mile hike, with an elevation change of 1,000 feet, on the Appalachian Trail from Long Branch to Glassmine Gap to Rock Gap in the Standing Indian Area. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin (opposite Burger King) at 10AM; drive 25 miles round trip. Bring water, lunch; wear sturdy shoes. Call leaders Bill & Sharon Van Horn at 369-1983 for reservations. Visitors are welcome but no pets please.

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On going and Upcoming Events

Sunday, Feb. 20

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 1.2 mile hike on Lakeside Dr. walking trail in Franklin. Meet at Macon Co. Health Center on Lakeside Dr. at 2 pm. No driving from here. Bring water, a snack if you wish; wear sturdy shoes. Call leader Kay Coriell at 369-6820 for reservations. Visitors and children ten and older are welcome but no pets please.

Feb. 19-April 2

• At The Bascom, view Regional Art Leagues annual exhibition. Call 526-4949 for more information.

Sunday, Feb. 20

• At the Episcopal Church, "Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier, BK1 (1-12)" at 2 p.m. featuring pianist Robert Henry. Donations accepted.

Sat., Feb. 26

• At The Bascom, Winter Barn Dance honoring police, firefighters and EMS from 7-10 p.m. Tickets are \$5. Call the Chamber of Commerce at 526-2112 for more information.

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate four-mile hike, with an elevation change of 800 feet, to Turtleback Falls/ Rainbow Falls/ Stair Step Falls. Mostly gentle slopes, but also a couple of steep ascents of 100 yards or so. Meet at Cashiers Wachovia Bank (in back) at 9 a.m. drive

16 miles round trip. Bring water, lunch, a camera if you wish; wear sturdy shoes. Call leader Walker Taylor at 743-6977 for reservations. Visitors are welcome but no pets please.

Saturday, March 5

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a strenuous 12-mile hike to Mt. Cammerer from Deep Creek Ranger Station. Meet at the Huddle House at Sylva at 8 am; drive 120 miles round trip from Sylva. Bring water, lunch, wear hiking boots. Call leader Don O'Neal at 586-5723 for reservations. Visitors are welcome but no pets please.

Sunday, March 6

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 2.2 mile hike on the Standing Indian Campground loop trail. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin (opposite Burger King) at 2 pm; drive 30 miles round trip. Bring water, a snack if you wish; wear sturdy shoes. Call leader Kay Coriell at 369-6820 for reservations. Visitors are welcome but no pets please.

Sat., March 26

• At The Bascom, Winter Barn Dance honoring veterans from 7-10 p.m. Tickets are \$5. Call the Chamber of Commerce at 526-2112 for more information.

Saturdays at The Bascom are a Treat



This Saturday, celebrate the service of our educators to the community and relive the memories of a great Highlands' tradition at The Bascom's Winter Barn Dance. For information, call (828) 526-4949 or visit www.thebascom.org.

"Saturdays at The Bascom" offer something for everyone.

Discover Art Cinema. This Saturday at 2 pm, sit back and enjoy our feature presentation is *Leonardo's Dream Machines*. Leonardo known for his Renaissance artistry was also a prolific scientist and engineer. Was Leonardo a dreamer or a revolutionary engineer? Admission is free.

The first Bascom Winter Barn Dance of the season is on Saturday, January 22, from 7-10 pm. Celebrate the service of our educators to the community. Gather with friends and neighbors and relive the memories of a great Highlands' tradition. Enjoy the music of Highlands' own "4118".

Tickets are \$5 per person and can be purchased at the door. Admission for honorees is complimentary. Don't miss it. The Bascom's Winter Barn Dances are sponsored by The Bascom, The Highlands Area Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center, the Highlands Historical Society, Bill and Sara Mann, Mountain Fresh Grocery, Ugly Dog Pub and Sam Call Productions.

Check out the exhibitions at The

Bascom.

Out Back and Down Under, through March 25. Recent works by photographer Greg Newington are featured. Works included will be from his recent Aussie tour down under, and images from out back on our mountain plateau.

Through February 12, view *Collections: The Bascom and The Hudson Library* featuring 20th and 21st century American art in numerous media.

In conjunction with his exhibition, Greg Newington returns to The Bascom on January 28-29 for *Photography for Lovers*. Capture something you love about your beloved. Part of Highlands Romance Weekend, learn how to add a sense of romance to your photos using light, filters and Photoshop.

The Bascom is open year round. Winter dates are from January 7th to April 2nd. The galleries and The Shop are open Fridays and Saturdays from 10 am-5 pm. For more details on all Bascom winter activities, visit www.thebascom.org or call 526.4949.

Snow Days cause adjustments in The Bascom's Youth Art Program schedule



Children use their imaginations and have fun taking youth art classes at The Bascom's. For information, call (828) 526-4949 or visit www.thebascom.org.

The Bascom has revised its youth art program schedule in response to recent snow days.

"Saturday Art School" with instructor Rosie Smith. Saturdays is now scheduled for January 29-February 10, 10 am-12 noon. Send your child to art school for the morning. Kindergartners through sixth graders are welcome for fun, skill building art classes using a variety of materials. \$8 per class.

"Tuesday After School Art" with instructor Melody Germain, Tuesdays through February 15, 3:15-4:30 pm. After school art for elementary aged students. Lessons include painting, modeling and collage. Kindergarten through sixth grade. \$30 for a six-week session or \$5 per class.

"Paint Like a Master" with instructor Susan Nastasic, Thursdays, January 20-March 10, 3:15-5 pm. After school art class-

es for middle and high school students. Each class will introduce a different artist and painting technique. Students will complete paintings in various artist's styles. The students' own style will be explored for the final painting. Class size is limited, pre-registration is required. Sixth through twelfth grade. \$80 for an eight-week session.

Please check The Bascom website homepage for information on cancellations due to weather.

Scholarship opportunities are available.

The Bascom is open year round. Winter dates are from January 7th to April 2nd. The galleries and The Shop are open Fridays and Saturdays from 10 am-5 pm. For more details on all Bascom winter activities, visit www.thebascom.org or call 526.4949.

• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

Free Grace



Rev. Sam Forrester
Whiteside Presbyterian
Church

I was approached by a man the other day who asked if I was the preacher who believed in free grace. I was taken back by his question. I asked him to explain. He repeated, "Are you the preacher who believes grace costs me nothing?" I told him I definitely believed that. Grace by the very nature of the word means something that costs nothing. I receive grace from God as a free gift.

Romans 11:35 "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?"

Grace literally means "unmerited favor." Do I believe grace cost nothing? No! I believe it cost God his only begotten Son but the cost was God's, not mine.

Every aspect of the believer's life is by the grace of God. Believers are unworthy of anything from God, but God considers them worthy through Christ. They are completely inadequate to minister, it is God by his grace and the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit that allows them to be his ministers. They have no desire in themselves to be self-sacrificing but by his grace God implants that spirit within them. They live their lives as believers by grace and by grace alone. They do not earn anything by their works. Yes, I believe grace is free.

The Bible is clear — God gives grace apart from human worth. Are Christians not called to do good works? Yes, they are called to works, but those works aren't done to earn anything from God. Those works are done in order to show their love and appreciation for what Christ did for them.

Understand, all of your service to God was made possible by God's unmerited favor. It was made effective by the Holy Spirit working in you. You brought absolutely nothing to God that you didn't first receive from him. If you brought to God even the most minute offering of worth, grace would no longer be grace.

The apostle Paul understood this and expressed it this way in Romans 7:18 "I know that nothing good lives in me, that is my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out." Every thought, every word, every deed that comes from you that is pleasing before God and glorifies him, comes as part of that wonderful free gift of grace bestowed on you by Jesus Christ.

Yes, I am the preacher who believes in free grace, for without it, there would be no salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-10 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith— and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

BLUE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Oliver Rice, Pastor (706) 782-3965
Sundays: School – 10 a.m., Worship – 11
Sunday night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7
Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting – 7 p.m.

BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11

CHAPEL OF SKY VALLEY

Sky Valley, GA

Church: 706-746-2999

Pastor's residence: 706-746-5770

Sundays: 10 a.m. – Worship

Holy Communion 1st Sunday of the month

Wednesdays: 9 a.m. Healing and Prayer with Holy

Communion each service

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

OF LATTER DAY SAINTS

NC 28 N. and Pine Ridge Rd., (828) 369-8329

Rai Cammack, Branch President, (828) 369-1627

CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

Rector: Jim Murphy, 252-671-4011

Worshipping at the facilities of

Whiteside Presbyterian Church, Cashiers

Sunday: Holy Communion - 9:00 a.m.; Adult Forum -

10:45, Bucks Coffee Cafe, Cashiers

Monday: Bible Study & Supper at members' homes -

6 p.m.

Wednesday: Men's Bible Study -8:30 a.m., First

Baptist Church

Thursday: Women's Prayer Group - 10 a.m.,

Whiteside Presbyterian Church; Healing Service at

noon

CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Everett Brewer

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11

Prayer – 6:30 p.m.

Evening Service – 1st & 3rd Sunday – 7 p.m.

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685

3645 Cashiers Rd, Highlands, NC

Senior Pastor Gary Hewins

Sun.: 9:30 am: Adult Sunday School

10:30 am: Middle School; 10:45 am: Children's

Program., Worship Service. 12:30 pm Student Arts

Group, 5 p.m. High School

Wed.: 6pm: CBC University Program

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

526-2968

Reverend Denson Franklin

Sunday: Breakfast; 9 A.M. - Sunday School

10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist (Rite II)

Monday: 4 p.m. Women's Cursillo Group

Tuesday: 8 a.m. Men's Cursillo Group

4:30 P.M. Education for Ministry

Wednesday: 6:30 P.M. Choir Practice

Thursday: 10 a.m. Holy Eucharist (Chapel)

10:30 a.m. Daughters of the King

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

526-4153

Sun.: Worship 10:45 a.m., 6:30 p.m.; School – 9:30

a.m.; Youth – 6:30 p.m.; Choir – 7:15

Wednesdays: Dinner – 5:30 p.m.; Team Kids – 6

p.m.; Prayer – 6:15 p.m., Choir – 7:30 p.m.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Dr. Lee Bowman, Pastor

Dr. Don Mullen, Parish Associate 526-3175

Sun.: Worship – 11 a.m.; Sun. School – 9:30

Mondays: 8 a.m. – Men's Prayer Group & Breakfast

Wednesdays – Choir – 7

HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Sixth Street

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11

Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study – 7

HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson

221 N. 4th Street

Sunday: School 9:30 a.m.; Morning Worship 10:45

a.m., Evening Worship, 6:30 p.m.

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

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Pastor Paul Christy 526-3376

Sun.: school 9:45 a.m.; Worship 11 a.m.; 5 p.m.

Youth

Wed: Supper; 6; 7:15 – children, youth, & adults

studies; 6:15 – Adult choir (nursery provided for

Wed. p.m. activities)

Thurs:12:30 – Women's Bible Study (nursery)

HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH – ELCA

Chaplain Margaret Howell

2152 Dillard Road – 526-9741

Sundays: Sunday School and Adult discussion group

9:30 a.m.; Worship/Communion – 10:30

HEALING SERVICE on the 5th Sunday of the month.

MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH

8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in Satolah

Pastor Matt Shuler, (828) 526-8425

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11

Choir – 6 p.m.

Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg. – 7 p.m.

MOUNTAIN SYNAGOGUE

St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church, Franklin

828-369-9270 or 828-293-5197

MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

Pastor: Clayton Lopez • 828-743-9704

Independent Bible Church

Sundays:10:30 a.m. at Blue Ridge School

Weds: Bible Study 6:30 p.m.; Youth Group 6 p.m.

OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS CATHOLIC

CHURCH

Rev. Dean Cesa, pastor

Parish office: 526-2418

Mass: – 9 a.m.: Sun., Thurs. & Fri

Saturday Mass – Mem Day through Oct. at 4 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Clifford Willis

Sundays: School –10 a.m.; Worship –11 a.m. & 7

Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg. – 7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Alfred Sizemore

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 10:45 a.m.;

Evening Worship – 6 p.m.

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

For more information call 526-3212.

SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer.

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11

Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study – 7

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

85 Sierra Drive • 828-524-6777

Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.

Child Care - 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Religious Education - 11 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Youth from 8th - 12th grades meet the second

Sunday of each month from 5 - 7:30 p.m

WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Cashiers, Rev. Sam Forrester, 743-2122

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11

...DC TRIP continued from page 1



Some of the community of Cruce Santa Rosa Bolivia

Overview of the Bolivian Water Project

By Hillrie Quin

The First Presbyterian Church of Highlands, North Carolina, United States of America has established a mission to bring clean drinking water to small communities in Bolivia.

We have partnered with the Highlands Bolivian Mission started by Dr. John Baumrucker and with both Rotary groups in Highlands.

We have been to Clean Water University, a training facility of Living Waters of the World and now have a trained team of volunteers. Living Waters for the World has trained over 1,000 volunteers who have installed over 400 clean water systems in 24 countries.

Our mission team will be going to El Chore, Bolivia and Cruce Santa Rosa Bolivia March 11-20, 2011. We hope to be installing systems in both communities at that time.

The water system that we are trained to install is shown in the attached picture. It will serve a community of 300 – 500 people with 20 liter bottles of clean water. The clean water is to be used for drinking, cooking and preparing food, taking care of babies and brushing your teeth. Other water currently available in the community should be used for all other water uses.

Education of the people of the

community is a very important part of our project. We will come prepared to teach the community about how and when to use the clean bottled water and other basic hygiene issues like the importance of washing your hands with soap.

The communities with whom we partner needs to be able to provide a secure place for the installation of the water system. They need to provide electricity to operate the system and several community members need to be trained to operate the system.

When our group from the United States comes to a community we will work with the water system operators and others in the community to build the system, and teach them how to operate the system.

A small fee will need to be charged for the bottled water to pay for the electricity, system maintenance and for the operation of the system. This fee must be less than one half what a commercial company would charge for bottled water.

If an agreement is reached with a community we agree to come back every year for a minimum of three years, to bring new filters and other parts needed for the successful operation of the system and to work with the community to make sure the clean water is having the expected health benefits.

... LETTERS continued from page 3

ing for all of us when she says “everyone knows and now it’s an appetite suppressor.”

Unless you’ve lived it then don’t come here with your drama and pretend to know what you’re talking about based on “he said, she said” because the bear hunters ran her photogenic bear friend off. That’s the wannabe attitude! It’s not like we’re asking her and her friends to go shoot one another. That would fall under the category of the “cruelty” she mentioned in her letter that “has no place in this world,” (or in our community). Keep praying for peace among us and practice what you preach! As far as being photogenic, I agree. As with all animals they are beautiful. Even the rattlesnakes and copperheads have some brilliant colors and features. I have a few nice photos myself and I have the good sense to know they are still wild creatures with that wild instinct and I’ll respect their space if

they’ll respect mine. If the bear hunters were to boycott Highlands and stop hunting (and couldn’t blame them if they did) and the bear population built up, we humans would start looking like a really good meal to our bear friends. That’s when she would learn a whole new appreciation for our way of life as we have already learned having come nose to nose with them.

So keep that camera with you at all times, and remember to take as many photos as possible so we will all know for a fact what happened to you if and when that aggressive bear gets hold of you and drags you off into the laurel thicket and you disappear — just so some bear hunter doesn’t get the blame for your disappearance when “he said, she said.”

Audrey Keener
Highlands

pressed by the tight security of the White House, as well as the rooms in the house itself. Freshman Ann-Marie Osteen also pointed out that it was “very interesting to see the decorations within the White House and all of the paintings.”

Also on the agenda for Saturday was a tour of the Capitol Building and a trip to the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. The Air and Space Museum was a favorite for many students, including senior Michael Shearl. “The Flight Simulators at the Air and Space museum were really cool,” said Shearl, “that place was the best because it was full of interesting stuff.” The students wrapped up their day Saturday with a pizza party and some down time at the hotel in preparation for a busy Sunday.

Sunday morning the tour group arrived at the Holocaust Museum, which provides a chilling reminder of the horrors of the Nazi regime in Europe. After a quick lunch at the Smithsonian museum of American History, the students arrived at the Washington Monument, where the group was able to ascend to the top of the 555-foot structure to take in some incredible views of Washington, DC. Sophomore Hayden Bates said that she was very impressed with “being able to see the entire city from the top of the monument,” and senior Robbie Vanderbilt also enjoyed “seeing everything from the top, even the airport and football stadium.” Junior Cody St. Germain also said that the Washington Monument was his favorite experience of the trip, noting how “cool it was to see the plaques on the inside of the monument that honored different states and things like that.”

After leaving the Washington Monument, the students embarked on a quick walking tour of the memorials in the area before arriving at Arlington Cemetery to view the changing of the guard ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns. Sophomore Abigail Hewins was happy to have the opportunity to visit Arlington and to see “the way that our country honors their servicemen; it was very special.”

Monday morning the group left Washington to return to Highlands, but not before

stopping at Mount Vernon, which was the estate of our first President, George Washington. The tour of Mount Vernon consists of a guided tour through the mansion of Washington, which has been preserved to look as it did in 1799 at the time of Washington’s death. From there, groups are free to tour the grounds of the estate, including Washington’s gravesite, the Wharf on the Potomac River and the innovative farm structures from Washington’s era. Lead Chaperone Chris Green enjoys Mount Vernon more than any other portion of the tour in that “it just is so peaceful there, almost as if you were stepping backwards into a simpler time in our history.”

All in all, the trip was an overwhelming success according to Green. “I think everything ran very smoothly, and once the kids got home and were able to rest a little bit and recover, they have been able to appreciate the experience of the trip and how much fun they had over the last few days.”

Highlands School Principal Brian Jetter agrees with that sentiment, and used a personal example from his own childhood to demonstrate the importance of these types of experiences. Jetter remarked that to this day he still has memories from his own visit to the Smithsonian when he was younger and the impact that it had upon him.

“Experiencing things can often be better than just hearing about them,” said Jetter, “I think it is very valuable when students go on these types of trips because there is a chance that they will learn more on the trip about the subject than they would in a classroom.”

Green would like to thank all of the parents who helped support their children financially and enabled them to attend this trip. He also would like to thank chaperones Tracy Hedden, Ashley Coppage, Carol Bowen and Gina Billingsley for their help with the preparations as well as their general help throughout the weekend.

Special thanks also to the Macon County Board of Education and the administration of Highlands School for supporting these types of student experiences as well.



After last weekend's trip to Washington, DC, Highlands School students came away with a new appreciation of the nation's capital.

Macon County Public Health kicks off the New Year with 'Open Access'

To improve access to care and become more customer-friendly, Macon County Public Health will officially discontinue its long-standing practice of established "clinic days" in favor of an "open access" system.

"Open access is a scheduling system where patients are seen at the first available appointment slot, regardless of the reason for their visit," said Macon County Health Director Jim Bruckner. "The open access will improve customer service by reducing wait times often associated with participating in a public health service." For example, children will no longer have to wait for the twice a month Child Health Clinic; they will be given the first available appointment slot and still receive all of the customary services.

The open access system at the public health center will result in an experience which is similar to what patients are accustomed to with a regular physician's office visit. Patients will call in for a service and be given the first available appointment slot; often falling on the actual day they call for service. The open access scheduling will be used for most clinical services including laboratory work.

"This project is a result of our on-going Quality Improvement program" stated Bruckner. "Our staff has been working on the transition to this system for some time and to facilitate a smooth process, we've enlisted the help of the NC Center for Public Health Quality, the NC Institute for Public Health, and the Area Health Education Center." Bruckner said the agency's goal is to reduce the current wait times from up to three weeks to less than three days for certain programs.

He said the public health center is not changing the type of services they offer, only the scheduling system. "To have this new system work efficiently for everyone, appointments will be required for all clinical services, that's the only change."

Clinic days in Highlands and Nantahala will not change and access to services and office hours in those communities will remain the same.

Patients are seen Mon. - Fri. from 8 am to 4:30 pm in Franklin and sponsors special outreach clinics in Highlands and Nantahala. Macon County Public Health will file Medicare, Medicaid, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Tricare, Cresent, and certain Medicare replacements for its patients. To schedule an appointment for any of the services listed above, please call 349-2081 or visit <http://www.maconnc.org/health-department.html>

Hospital meets growing need for physical therapy services in the area

In 2010, Highlands-Cashiers Hospital's Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Center treated nearly 16,000 patients. The Center provides therapies for outpatient, surgical, rehabilitation and long-term care services, allows local and seasonal residents access to services close to home and often makes a significant difference in attained levels of physical function and capacity.

"There is certainly a growing need for more rehabilitation services in the area, and since our expansion to the Cashiers community a few years back, we have been able to meet those demands," said Alan Frederick, Physical Therapist and Program Director. "I believe the recent growth particularly reflects the addition of Amy Nader, Cashiers Physical Clinic's supervising Physical Therapist, and our excellent staff. We continually receive positive feedback of satisfaction and appreciation from our patients. Having both locations allows us to accommodate the increased patient load and has enabled us to expand our specialized services and rehabilitation programs."

Bruce Dillard, of Cashiers, has benefited from local physical therapy services. Dillard came to Cashiers Physical Therapy Center in May 2010 after undergoing a left total knee replacement. "Soon after I began therapy, I had to see my surgeon again for a manipulation (while under anesthesia, the knee is bent at the joint to improve the range of motion) due to tightness and built up scar tissue," said Dillard. "After the manipulation, I was immediately placed back in therapy. The Physical Therapy staff worked through Memorial Day weekend in order to re-start my treatment and jump start the healing process."

Dillard's story doesn't end there. Last month, Dillard traveled back to his surgeon for a right total knee replacement. "It's not unusual to see a situation like Dillard's," said Amy Nader, PT. "An injury to one knee joint can sometimes place the uninjured joint under additional stress, in turn, causing damage. He diligently comes in weekly for his treatments and since has made tremendous improvement. Our staff has no doubt that Dillard's condition will continue to improve and make a full recovery."

Local Highlands resident, Chuck Cooper, has been visiting the center three times a week for the past two years and is quick to praise Frederick and his staff. "The clinical expertise and core values of compassion and respect, demonstrate their firm commitment to providing high quality care," said Cooper. During his early adult life, Cooper was involved in an automobile accident, severely injuring his neck and back. Later on, he developed degenerative lower back and cervical issues that greatly affected his mo-

• HOSPITAL NEWS •



Amy Nader, Cashiers Physical Clinic's supervising Physical Therapist with patient "Bruce" Dillard.

bility. Cooper underwent cervical spine surgery in February of 2009 and soon began rehabilitation at HCH. "My weekly treatments have gotten me back on my feet, granting me the freedom to continue with my day-to-day activities. The Physical Therapy team, Dr. Plauché and Anesthesiologist, Dr. Shoptaugh, have worked closely together to devise a rehabilitation plan to help alleviate my pain and hopefully prevent future lower back surgery. The services they provide are priceless."

• POLICE & FIRE DEPT. REPORTS •

Highlands PD log entries from Jan 12 Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor, or public officials have been used.

Jan. 12

- At 3 p.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident at Hickory Hill and Wyanoak roads.

Jan. 13

- At 2:16 a.m., officers helped the driver of a tractor-trailer who had slid out of the road at S. 4th and Spring streets.

- At 4:30 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident at US 64 and S. 3rd Street.

Jan. 14

- At 2 a.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident at US 64 east and Carolina Way.

- At 10:30 a.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on NC 106.

Jan. 15

- At 11:11 p.m. officers investigated a call of a subject not being allowed to leave a residence on S. 4th Street.

- At 10:30 a.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident at NC 28 and Many Road.

- During the week, police officers responded to 1 alarm and issued 1 citation.

Highlands F & R Dept. log entries from Jan 13:

Jan. 13

- At 12:45 p.m., the dept. assisted EMS with a woman who had fallen on ice and injured her face.

Jan. 14

"Our Physical Therapy program and its staff are the best I've worked with," said Dr. Plauché, Board Certified Orthopedic Surgeon. "Each patient is provided with one on one attention, speeding recovery and improving prognoses, which large city hospitals, just cannot give. The program also allows my patients convenience for post surgery therapy and for individuals that have traveled off the mountain for surgery, the ability to come home for therapy."

HCH's Physical Therapy Center focuses on comprehensive treatment plans, educates patients and families and consults with various healthcare providers. Frederick and his team treat, evaluate, and rehabilitate individuals with orthopedic and musculoskeletal conditions resulting from sports or work injuries, motor vehicle accidents or such conditions that have developed without prior injury, including arthritis and pre and post-op orthopedic surgeries.

"We are our very proud of the work done by our rehabilitation specialists. Our goal is to provide our area residents with tools and services to live a better life," said President and CEO, Craig James.

- At 3:16 a.m., the dept. was first-responders on a medical call to a residence on Shortoff Road. The victim was taken to the hospital.

- At 8:58 p.m., the dept. responded to a structure fire on Netsi Place. The dept. was assisted by the Scaly, Cullasaja and Cashiers fire departments.

Jan. 15

- At 1:05 p.m., the dept. was called back to Netsi Place to tend to hotspots.

Jan. 16

- At 12:25 a.m., the dept. responded to an alarm at a residence on Falls Drive West. It was caused by the sprinkler system.



Jeff Miller was one of three Highlands Fire & Rescue members who received a pin and certificate for five years of service from Chief James Manley Saturday night. Not pictured are Chris Metrick and Justin Taylor.

Photo by Jim Lewicki



Pictured from left: Johnathon O'Brien Unit Clerk, Stacey Flemister RN, Anna Jenkins CNA, Mary Kay Crandall RN, Kathy Egan RN and Shelly Clark CNA.

H-C Hospital staff camps out during inclement weather

Clinical and administrative staff at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital showed exemplary dedication when they camped out overnight Sunday, January 9th through Wednesday, January 12th to assure they will be on the job during the winter conditions. Bunked in vacant patient rooms, doubled up with other staffers, employees went the extra mile to meet the needs of patients.

"I am continually impressed with the commitment and professionalism of our staff, especially during the recent weather conditions," said Eileen Lipham, Interim Chief Nursing Officer. "Sunday, before the storm hit, Nursing, Radiology, Laboratory, Respiratory Therapy and Environmental Services staff began showing up with overnight bags packed and tooth brush in hand, prepared to stay as long as they needed to care for our patients. Their "do whatever it takes attitude" is a statement, showing the true commitment of each employee.

Furthermore it was their spouses and family members who also stepped up, making sure their loved one got safely to work.

Be ready for weather-related emergencies this winter

By Warren Cabe
MC Director of Emergency Services

Winter weather events are occurring in Macon County more frequently than in the past several years and preparedness is the key to surviving and thriving during such events.

Local officials and agencies can't reach everyone immediately after a major winter storm. Families should be prepared to face cold and storms as they affect the region.

Every home should have a basic emergency supply kit to include the following:

- A 3-day supply of water equal to one gallon per person per day.
- A 3-day supply of non-perishable food
- A flashlight and extra batteries
- A stocked first-aid kit.

Banks and ATMs may not be open or available as normal so a small supply of cash may be helpful for purchases. If you use pre-

scription medications, make sure your supply is adequate.

Registered Nurse, Mary Kay Crandall, stayed during the night for multiple shifts and with her sacrifice; she was shown a special act of love. Crandall's son ventured out in the bitter cold to bring her a blanket from their home. Crandall said, "The experience of sleeping in an unfamiliar room for several nights was lightened by having a small reminder of home with me."

Lipham said "HCH does not have the luxury of hanging a "We're Closed" sign outside our doors. At all times we are open 24/7, 365 days a week. Our staff is here for one reason, to provide care and treatment to our patients. Last week's winter storm certainly dramatizes how important it is to have quality health care services available locally. Driving windy mountain roads in hazardous weather conditions is extremely dangerous and we are fortunate to have a hospital nearby. We encourage residents especially during times of wintery weather to stay warm, inside and remember to use proper safety measures if going outside in inclement conditions."

The National Weather Service and other forecasters provide routine weather warning programming at all times. Staying up-to-date on current conditions and predictions will help you to be prepared. A National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) battery operated radio can keep you informed both before and after a storm.

The use of improperly ventilated generators can cause deadly carbon monoxide buildup in the home and the use of improper heating devices can lead to fires. The proper storage and refueling of portable kerosene heaters is paramount to home safety.

Many other preparedness tips are available at www.ready.gov or by contacting the Macon County Emergency Management office at 929-349-2067.

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... CHARTER continued from page 1

Town Manager's power, the first reading of the amended ordinance was passed 3-2 with Commissioners Amy Patterson and John Dotson voting nay. A second reading is needed.

Without a 4-1 vote the ordinance change must be considered again at the Feb. 2 Town Board meeting.

If the vote is still 3-2 in favor of giving the Town Manager complete control over hiring, firing, compensation and everything else concerning the governance of Highlands, then the Police Chief will no longer answer to the Town Board, but to the Town Manager. Before the Zoning/Watershed/Stormwater Administrator's job is in the hands of the Town Manager, the Planning Board has to make a recommendation to the Town Board. At the next Town Board meeting, a vote will be taken to determine the Zoning Administrator's fate and a subsequent Public Hearing must be held to hear what the citizens of Highlands want and think before a final vote is taken on the matter.

Wednesday night, Commissioner Gary Drake opened the discussion by making the motion to amend the ordinance with the verbiage changes. Commissioner Larry Rogers immediately agreed. Though Dennis DeWolf was silent during the first half of the discussion, by the end he agreed wholeheartedly that the Town Manager should have ultimate control. "He has to be in the position to manage and as long as we have checks and balances when it comes to firing we have the tools we need," he said. "We made the decision to put the town in the hands of a professional who could move the employees forward in a positive direction to do the best job they can do. We made the decision to go in this direction and I don't think we should go back."

Citizens raised questions about the Town

Manager's authority to fire. "The words, 'unless it requires immediate termination' means he can fire anyone at anytime," said John Underwood.

Commissioner Drake explained that circumstances that require immediate termination would be if someone was drunk on the job and hit someone with a car on Main Street. "That would be reason to terminate immediately," he said. Underwood asked why the town wouldn't put that person on a leave of absence as is often heard on the news concerning police officers who shoot someone in the line of duty. "Why would you immediately fire someone?" he asked.

Ginger Slaughter asked why the board was set on changing the charter when everything appeared to be working well. "If it's not broke, why fix it?" she asked. "I assume a lot of thought was put into changing to the Council-Manager form of government and to leave the Police Chief and the Zoning Administrator answering to the Town Board. I assume the reason they were separated out was because of the legislation and laws they must uphold compared to other employees. What isn't working?"

Commissioner Rogers said what he's said all along, "What if the Town Manager tells them to do something and those employees say 'I don't have to, I answer to the Town Board?'"

Commissioner Dennis DeWolf said the board doesn't know if it isn't broken. "Maybe it could be better. Maybe communication and interrelationships between boards could be better."

Commissioners Patterson's first comment early in the meeting concerned the word "consult" in the new paragraph, "The Town Manager shall consult with the Board of Commissioners, in closed session, prior the termination of any employee, unless cir-

cumstances require immediate termination."

"How much teeth does the word 'consult' have versus the word 'approve'?" she asked. "What if he still says, 'I still want to fire this person?'"

Town Attorney Bill Coward said it wouldn't be very smart for a Town Manager to fire someone if the commissioners tell him not to. However, as witnessed since November, a 3-2 vote is all it takes for commissioners to agree with the Town Manager.

Patterson said the problem with a closed session meeting with the Town Manager, at which the targeted employee is not a part, is that the issue of firing someone is rarely cut and dry.

"These issues are often nebulous not black and white, so it's difficult to know what's really going on. The manager, in a subtle way, can spin it so it sounds like we should agree with him but we wouldn't have the background. The word 'approve' means just that, the word 'consult' means no one has to take his opinion."

Coward said the board could always say "Thanks for your opinion but we would prefer to talk to the employee before you fire him."

DeWolf said the board shouldn't want to undermine the Town Manager, but alluding to the recent firing of Joe Cooley, Patterson reminded DeWolf how well that attitude worked.

She said she wasn't comfortable relinquishing control in all matters to the Town Manager. "Our oversight as a board will be harder to do if we give the Town Manager this much control. We weren't elected to have 'faith' in what the Town Manager is doing, we were elected to 'know' what he is doing," she said.

She used compensation as an example. "How many of us know how what everyone's compensation is? We don't know who

makes what; at budget time we are given a lump sum for wages in each department. All governments are believed to be corrupt because there isn't enough oversight by the elected officials who have direct connection with citizens. What we do can't be based on faith but on what we know. This change represents a huge shift and concentration of control and power."

Allen Marsh said he and Herb James, both past commissioners, believe changing the charter from its current hybrid form of Council-Manager to the more boiler-plate version is premature.

Patterson agreed. "We need more time to see how well this is working," she said.

Dotson said beside the firing and compensation parts of the ordinance, he was concerned about the hiring angle.

"We will have no oversight or approval in the hiring process and that is just as important as the firing process," he said. "The possibility of a Town Manager being unfamiliar with the intricacies of Highlands is about 100%."

Patterson said the Town Manager may not have a feel for the pulse of Highlands. "It's the folks who are elected who should have the pulse. Without our oversight, he can hire anyone he wants and compensate him for anything."

When Drake said that's what the budget process is for, she asked again "How many of us know who is compensated for what?" She said that's information the board has had prior to the hiring of the Town Manager.

Coward said under the statute, the board can impose any limitations it wants on the Town Manager's job and give him specific ways he can do it.

A second reading of the amended ordinance will be heard at the Feb. 2 Town Board meeting.

-- Kim Lewicki

... LETTER continued from page 2

tested those decisions made by "Washington clowns."

I saw an interview recently of a gay Air Force captain who was an F16 fighter pilot who had received several combat medals. He was selected to be one of the fighter pilots to protect our nation's capitol after 911. Under the Don't Ask Don't Tell Policy, someone had accused him of

being a homosexual and he did not deny it. The Air Force attempted to discharge him after nearly 20 years of distinguished service. The captain took the position that he didn't want to continue living a lie by officially denying his sexual orientation. We need good, dedicated people in the military regardless of their gender, race, national origin, or sexual orienta-

tion. We have them serving the nation now.

I am sorry a good red-blooded American guy, like Fred, has personal apprehensions about homosexuals, but his last statement about child molesters in the military was really uncalled for. His innuendo was not very subtle.

Maybe while Fred relaxes in Miami

he can get a hold of the newly released drug, "KneeJerkator." Now don't get mad at me Fred, I am just following your outstanding example by doing a little satire. All in good fun?

Patrick Taylor
Veteran, US Army
Highlands

... MAIN STREET continued from page 1

candidate for the grant," said Fatland. "Mr. Lupoli is looking to renovate the square — matching the previously completed Kilwin's — and add public restrooms."

The town will provide maintenance of the public restroom facilities and will provide wayfinding to direct visitors to the public restrooms of Town Square.

To receive \$200,000, Lupoli would have to show that he is spending \$400,000 and that his project will create or retain eight new

full-time positions. Each position is worth \$25,000 in grant money, so the final figure could be adjusted based on Lupoli's employment needs.

Fatland said the project would add two additional commercial spaces and enlarge the existing commercial spaces. The project would create several additional jobs and maintain several existing jobs, making this project an excellent applicant, he said.

As part of the application process the

Town Board must approve a resolution supporting the project within the downtown. Applications are due by the close of business on Feb. 5, 2011.

To date only Lupoli and the Lewis family expressed interest in the grant program. The Lewis's were interested due to the renovation and expansion of The Sports Page on Main Street.

Fatland said the Lewis's dropped out because to be eligible to receive grant funds, the

project must not be under construction prior to disbursement. "They declined to wait until after a grant decision because they wanted to complete their project prior to next season."

He said Lupoli has decided to delay construction until the town hears back on the grant. To date, Lupoli has received both Planning and Zoning board approval for the project.

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New officers at Fire Department for 2011



Officers for 2011 were announced Saturday night at the Highlands Fire & Rescue annual awards dinner. Pictured from left are Roger Lee Wilson, 2nd. Lt.; Jimmy Petrone, Rescue Capt.; Ryan Gearhart, Asst. Chief; Bobby Lewis, Secretary; Back row from left: Chief James Manley and Matthew Wilson, Fire Capt. Not pictured was Jimmy Tate, 1st. Lt.; Eric Pierson, Rescue Capt.; Robbie Forrester, Operations Lt.; and Terry Watson, Treasurer. Noted for perfect attendance in 2010 at the weekly Tuesday night meetings were Jamie Barnes, Hunter Leffler, David Leffler, Jimmy Petrone and Roger Lee Wilson.

Photo by Jim Lewicki

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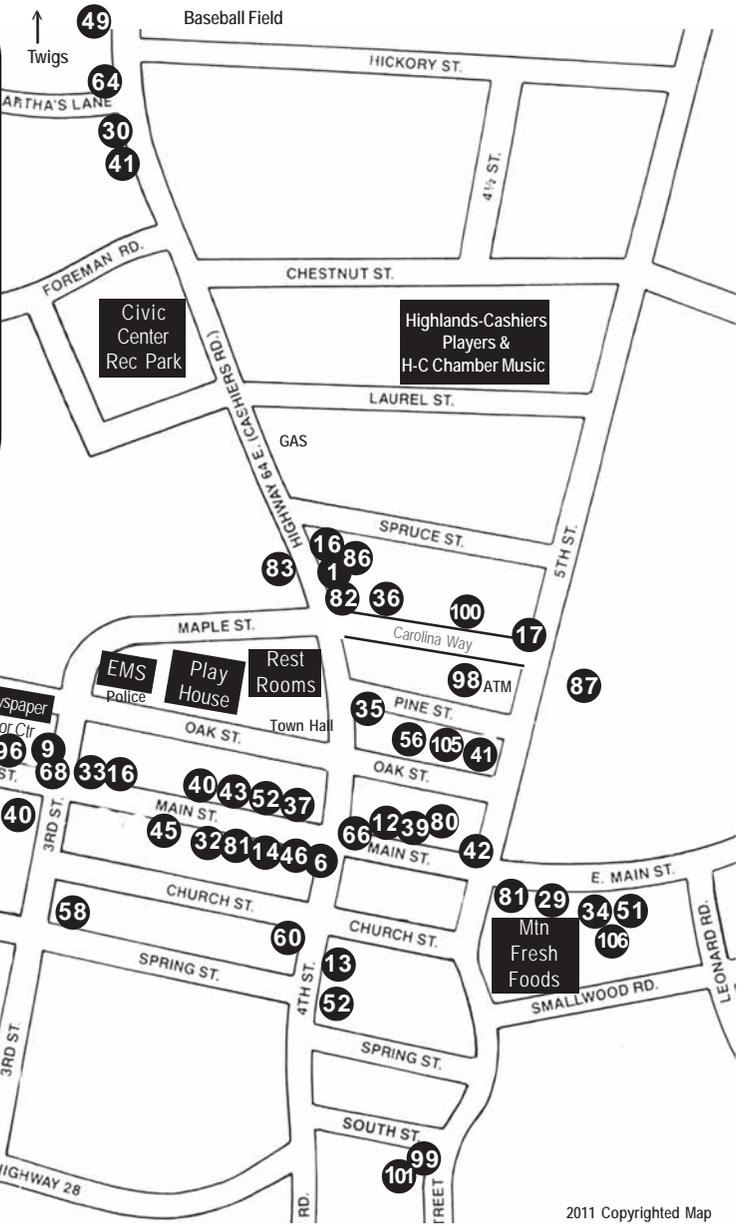


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