Planning B. split 2-2 on charter change; Includes detailed comment with recommendation

Only four of the seven members were in attendance at the January Planning Board meeting whose main purpose was to discuss the proposed amendments to the ordinance connected to the Town Charter defining the Council-Manager form of government. Though the Planning Board didn’t request his presence, nor did the Town Board, according to Commissioner John Dotson, who was also at the meeting, Town Attorney Bill Coward was there to explain the reason for the change. His presence changed the tenor of the meeting—members were not their normal “talkative” selves—but rather more guarded and careful.

BOE braces for state shortfalls in 2011-12

At the Jan. 24 Macon County School Board meeting, Superintendent Dan Brigman prepared members what will be a grueling budget process this year. “This year we have some very tough decisions to make in our county and throughout the state,” said Brigman.

In a PowerPoint presentation, entitled “Preparing for the 2011 NC General Assembly Session,” he laid out the bare facts beginning with why school districts and counties across the state are facing a dire future.

Budget Basics — Situation Analysis

It’s old news by now, but the state is in bad shape fiscally and the ramifications will be felt more this year than ever before. NC budget shortfall approx $3.7 billion for the 2011-12 fiscal year. The cause? The end of federal stabilization funds (ARRA); end of some state taxes; end of non-recurring cuts; Economic recovery continues to be slow; the loss of Federal ARRA funds total $1.6 billion; the tax cap set to expire June 30.

Boys basketball in action

Girls basketball in action

Fire Dept. hiring full-time employee

At the Jan. 19 Town Board meeting, Fire Chief James Manley told the board the department needs another full-time employee to both help with paperwork as it projects set for 2011-12

At a worksession last Wednesday, for FY 2011-2012 budget purposes, the Town Board finalized what project it would implement from the parking study. The parking study suggestions were forwarded to the Planning Board as well as to the Main Street Program’s Design Group and were then considered by the Town Board. Since most project require money, they won’t be implemented until the next year’s budget cycle.

Wayfinding signs were the first item on the list, and though Town Manager Jim Fatland suggested hiring a graphic artist and allocating $3,000 now to begin work, Commissioners Amy Patterson and John Dotson suggested waiting until April 30, the date the new flag design will bepicked, before spending any money.

The board said the Main Street Project Design group could work on verbiage, size of signs, colors, etc., but to wait on everything else. Placement for signage was already determined in the parking study. Much talk centered around the trees on Main Street leaning toward using trees more natural to the area.

Hiking, Waterfalls, Fly Fishing

Websites

Nature’s Website

HighlandsInfo.com
Rumblings from dissatisfied citizens still ringing from the Erika Olvera case (which is still active) and Joe Cooley’s termination are beginning to gain in decibels.

Due to the aforementioned events, which occurred during the first and third quarters of 2010, Highlands’ town government has been cast in a shadow of suspicion, and that shadow is lengthening.

Now add the habit of putting completed issues back on the Town Board agenda if the vote doesn’t go as orchestrated and the practice of filling positions with Town Manager Jim Fatland’s past acquaintances, and you’ve got a sour mix of doing business at Town Hall.

Citizens’ faith and trust has greatly diminished.

It’s been more than two years since the town adopted the resolution to change its form of government from the hybrid Mayor-Council form to a hybrid Council-Manager form. Highlands fit the required criteria based on the number of services it provides its citizens and the number of people it employs — more than 25.

The issue was finalized with a unanimous vote at the Aug. 20, 2008 Town Board meeting to adopt a hybrid form of the Council-Manager government — with the understanding that the form could revert back in two years. By state statute, once a form of government is changed, it must stand for two years. That two years is up. Under that hybrid form, due to the laws and legislation they must uphold, the board agreed the Police Chief and the Zoning Watershed/Stormwater administrator should continue to answer to the Town Board — though their day-to-day business should come under the Town Manager.

It is that hybrid form that Mayor David Wilkes, Town Manager Fatland and three other commissioners — Gary Drake, Dennis DeWolf and Larry Rogers — want.

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It is that hybrid form that Mayor David Wilkes, Town Manager Fatland and three other commissioners — Gary Drake, Dennis DeWolf and Larry Rogers — want.
Bertha Fay Edwards Girard, age 97, of Durham, NC, formerly of Brevard, NC, died Tuesday, January 18, 2011. She was born in Macon County, the daughter of the late Mack Daniel Edwards and Perdita Bolick Edwards. She was married to the late Harold Addison Girard. She was a member of Brevard United Methodist Church. She had worked in a paper mill for 45 years. She loved to garden (much more than housework) and was known for her excellent road work and bizarre method of performing same in the rain. She knew the importance of liming apple trees, loved to wear Pith helmet, rubber galoshes and culottes. She loved to travel and keep in touch with her many relatives, she loved music - thought the Beatles harmonized well. She loved the ocean, lakes, ponds, creeks and streams.

She is survived by two daughters, Virginia Johnson and husband Leon “John,” and Jerry Taylor and husband Lee; two grandchildren, Dianna Lee Taylor and husband Sean Smith and Christopher Harold Taylor. She was preceded in death by a granddaughter, Sarah Elizabeth Johnson, who died in 1982. She was the last of the children of Perdita and Mack Daniel Edwards. She was preceded in death by her siblings, Dan, Virginia (Sis), True, Floyd, Troy, John, Eric, Cecil, Bruce, and Felicia.

Funeral services were held Saturday, January 22 in the Chapel of Bryant-Grant Funeral Home in Highlands, with Paul Edwards officiating. Burial was in Horsecove Cemetery. Pallbearers were Lee Taylor, Chris Taylor, Terry Edwards, Paul Edwards, Joel Waldon, and Sean Smith.

Memorials may be made to Hospice of Wake County, 250 Hospice Circle, Raleigh, NC 27607. Bryant-Grant Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Highlands Police Dept. recognized

At the Jan. 19, Town Board meeting, Mayor Pro Temp John Dotson presented Highlands Police Chief Bill Harrell a plaque from Triple AAA recognizing the work his department has done to make Highlands the number one “Traffic Safe” community for a town with less than 10,000 in population for the fourth year in a row.

At Wednesday night’s Town Board meeting, Police Chief Harrell presented Officer Ronnie Castle with a framed certificate from the NC Department of Justice’s Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission. He exceeded requirements for the recognition by completing more than 720 training hours. Awards are based upon a formula which combines formal education, law enforcement training, and actual experience as a law enforcement officer.

Photos by Kim Lewicki

Misty Odor? It’s Mold!

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www.ahealthyhomeNC.com

What’s for Dinner?

Your favorite lunch place now has homemade dinner to go. All served hot and ready to take home. Mon - Sat pick up from 4:30 pm until 6:30 pm.

Each Dinner feeds a family of four

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Buffalo Wings or Chicken Tenders and hand cut fries</td>
<td>$14.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>Premium in-house made soup, large salad and dinner rolls</td>
<td>$15.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>Chicken or Steak pot pie and a large salad</td>
<td>$14.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu</td>
<td>Roasted Meatloaf, homemade mashed potatoes, and a large salad</td>
<td>$14.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>Wild fried shrimp, baked potatoes, handmade hush puppies, and coleslaw</td>
<td>$18.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>In-house smoked BBQ, coleslaw, apple and bacon baked beans, and yeast rolls</td>
<td>$16.95</td>
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Mon - Sat open at 7 am and Sundays at 8 am.  Corner of 5th & Main, Highlands NC 828-526-2400
...on this day from the History Guy

Jan 27, 971

The Chinese War Elephant Corps of the Southern Han is soundly defeated by crossbow fire from Song Dynasty troops. The use of elephants in war began to decline as a result.

Maybe you can, but I can't explain the loss by the elephant. I mean, I'd have a grave concern about a dust up with a pachyderm, but on the other Han, perhaps someone who's Chinese can. Were they very disappointed, and did they become disoriented? Would I be too far wrong to say victory was purchased for a song?

It was obvious, even elementary, it was the beginning of the end of the Elephantry. It's often true, you know, surprises often come with a bow.

Wildlife Commission reaffirms its support for hunting with dogs

Last week, the Wildlife Resources Commission unanimously adopted a resolution reaffirming its longstanding support for hunting with the use of dogs.

"We support the use of dogs in hunting in North Carolina where such hunting is consistent with the sound conservation of our state's treasured wildlife resources and not contrary to the protection of the property rights of its citizens," said Gordon Myers, executive director of the Commission. "Hunting with dogs is a part of centuries-old tradition in North Carolina and the members of the Wildlife Resources Commission determined that it was important to clarify their position regarding those practices."

The partnership of hunters and hunting dogs, commissioners affirmed, has long been a central thread of North Carolina hunting culture, and thousands of hunters, young and old, use dogs to pursue grouse and quail, waterfowl and woodcock, deer and bear, rabbits and squirrels, foxes and bobcats, and raccoons and opossums.

For more information on hunting in North Carolina visit www.nowildlife.org.

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Happy New Year and Thanks for a great season!

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526-4035 • 490 Carolina Way • Highlands

Fred Woolridge

Feedback is encouraged!
email: askfredanything@aol.com

Where do you stick your tongue during winter?

I spoke with a true Highlander yesterday who told me a bear that frequents his property showed up the other day carrying a Miami Heat flag, wearing an overcoat, goulashes and a hat. The bear dropped by to wave goodbye before heading for Florida to avoid the cold and hunters.

Way back when High- lands got slammed with its first cold front and it was snowing sideways with 35 mph winds and 13 degrees, I began to worry. I couldn't open that water valve in the back bathroom or not? Last summer I was forced to put on a new roof so this year I'll worry about water trapped in my pipes and not water leaking into my home. Pipes are a better worry.

As predicted by those weirdo weather gurus who study squiggly line patterns and the sex life of certain caterpillars to forecast weather, it's another bitter, bitter winter. Two bitters is bad cold, three bitters is bad, bad cold. Even Floridians are buying space heaters from Home Depot to stay warm. Hey, for nine bucks, how can ya go wrong?

I use the weather stone for predications. When it's white, it's snowing, when it's wet, it's raining and if it sticks to your hand, it's below zero. This system works well and it's cheap. I do cheap.

And where is Al Gore now that we need him. I could use another pep talk about how this planet is heating up so fast that Florida will be under water soon.

Please, Al, I've seen more, especially now that we could use you. Even Al had to turn off his pool heater 'cause it couldn't keep up with all this cold. Ask me if I'm feeling sorry for him. (Ha)

Moving on, the one thing I envy Highlanders for is the many wonderful places they have to stick their tongues during winter. Back when I lived in Louisville, KY, I stuck my tongue in some awesome places. Once, on a field trip to Washington, DC, I got to stick my tongue to the door handles of the Supreme Court. I felt honored. Hey, I was president of a tongue-sticking club and my job was to find frozen metal at famous places and inform team members. Could I make this up? I know, I know, you hope so.

Does anyone remember when a whole different set of crackpots predicted the next Ice Age was coming soon? Sooner or later, a crackpot will guess right and become a world renowned genius. I hope it's not Al Gore 'cause he's such a dork. Like with the new post office, global warming is about money and not about truth. I wish folks weren't so gullible.

Kim and Jim Lewicki sent me video of the High- landers' dancers from the Christmas parade. Thanks! While most would be watching those dancers, I was awe-struck there were no leaves on the hardwoods...ugly, ugly, ugly. Someone should videotape the entire parade from start to finish and sell it to us Floridians who could download it for a price. Hey, I'd pay five bucks to see the whole thing. Well...maybe two.

Moving on to really important stuff, I've known a lot of winos and burns in my other life as a cop. Some people lovingly call them homeless. Here's the difference. The homeless don't have alcohol on their breath. Would you believe I've never met a homeless person? Well, maybe two.

A couple of times I had to go to Brooklyn to buy heroin and this is what I've learned from the winos andbums living on those cold streets. Write this down.

If your house heat is turned up all the way and you're still shivering, here's a cheap solution. Remember, do cheap. First, get naked (that's the fun part) and then take old newspapers you've accumulated and wrap your body, attaching it with tape or string. If you use old Highland's Newspapers, be careful where you place your picture 'cause I'm very sensitive. Now put your clothes on and "Ta Da" you can turn down the heat and be comfortable.

At night, you can also pin old magazines between two layers of blankets on your bed and get rid of your blanket heater. Remember, you read it first in the totally free, take no prisoners, Highlands' Newspaper.

P.S. - Using rubbing alcohol to clean the newsprint off your privates.

• Read Fred's column on-line all winter at www.highlandsinfo.com, click on LOCAL NEWS
Keep unused drugs; but just for an emergency and just for personal use

Despite what the drug companies and family doctors say, I think it’s a good idea to keep unused prescription drugs around the house. Let’s be honest; not every patient is going to take every single dose prescribed. I’m not sure I ever completed a prescription. Some prescriptions are intended to be taken but only as needed. That’s the case with anti-inflammatory medicines and not pain. The intention is that a patient takes them only as long as needed. The only question is what to do with the leftovers?

The general suggestion among doctors and drug companies is to dispose of any unused medicine. It’s impossible to return them to the drugstore with an explanation, “Sorry, Frank won’t be needing these.” No. You bought ’em. You own ’em. Sure, you can follow directions and flush them down the toilet. It doesn’t come out of the doctor’s pocket. And unless you’re raising goldfish in the septic tank, the drugs won’t cause any harm down there.

There is another option; save them. Let’s say you’re a runner, and as is the case with most runners, you overdo it from time to time. You went to your doctor, who prescribed Celebrex. You paid about a dollar per capsule and have 10 left over. Your earlier injury wasn’t the first and probably won’t be the last. When you suffer a similar injury, do you want to wait for an appointment, pay for an office visit, and go the pharmacy, for Celebrex?

A few months earlier, you had flushed perfectly good Celebrex down the toilet. It’s six o’clock at night. Your ankle is throbbing and swelling like a grapefruit, and all you have is aspirin. It’s even more important to save narcotic pain medicine, because if you happen to experience a second injury or a flare up of gout, and you threw out the Percocet from your appendixectomy, you are going to hate yourself long before dawn.

When I went down on my mountain bike and struck a large rock with my thigh, I spent several sleepless nights before asking a colleague for a prescription. He wrote a prescription for two narcotics, a mild one and a more powerful option for pain unrelated by the first. I took one Demerol tablet that night, and slept for the first time in a week. I didn’t need a second one, but the one I took convinced me to keep the others intact for future needs.

Giving left over pills to your neighbor is a little less clear. It could be construed as practicing medicine without a license; or if any money changes hands, as narcotic trafficking. It’s best to avoid the practice. Of course, if your best friend calls and tells you she takes Lortab for her migraines, and she’s having one and she’s out of medicine, and you have a few left over from your root canal, sharing like the humanitarian thing to do.

On the other hand, narcotic abuse is a terrible problem in the United States. We all know that there are patients who feign severe pain in an attempt to secure narcotic medicines, either to satisfy their own addiction or who resell them with a 100% mark up. The mistake I’m thinking is the modest supply you put away in case of emergency is going to end up on the street.

I tried to assure the guilt you may feel for hoarding a few drugs. If it seems wrong, if you have small children, or if your husband’s nephew broke in last summer and went looking for drugs, the convenience of immediate relief may not justify the risk.

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... LETTERS continued from page 2

dresses. I still wear overalls, even in High-lands, even in so-called “downtown” High-lands.

The only reason I bring this up is be-cause I don’t want anyone, Ms. Keener in-cluded, to accuse me of missing the point of the re-argument. I am not and I don’t wanna-nee.

Nor will I poke my non-local nose into anyone’s bear hunting experience. In re-turn, please don’t sneer at me if you see me in the grocery or post office or on the street in my overalls. I come by them legitimate-ly and they are not a costume.

If I am working outdoors in overalls, but need to quickly go to town for some-thing, I am not going to change my clothes into something more “presentable” for the sake of appearances. First, that would be hypocritical and second, I am not embar-rased by my overalls, or anyone else’s.

And last but not least, please don’t accuse me of missing the point of the subject of the bear letters. I didn’t do it. It’s just not the point I am addressing, and have no desire nor intention of becoming entan-
gled in that controversy. There are too many other controversies I prefer.

Alice Nelson
Highlands

The facts about the Blue Valley ‘Wilderness’ designation

Dear Editor,

Blue Valley, also known as Overflow Creek WSA (wildness study area), is being considered for an important National legislative change the likes of which we have not seen since 1987 when it was first designated by Congress and approved by the Forest Service.

It currently is managed as a wilderness area even though it could change at any time at the discretion of the Forest Service, especially when leaned on by special interest groups. Nor will I poke my non-local nose into anyone’s bear hunting experience. In return, please don’t sneer at me if you see me in the grocery or post office or on the street in my overalls. I come by them legitimate-ly and they are not a costume.

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177 Sloan Road • Franklin, NC 28734
(828) 369-8006

Lee Hodges
Highlands/Macon County Resident

Tucson Tragedy: A Teachable Time

Dear Editor,

The adage “When all is said and done, more is said than done” does not apply to the recent Tucson event. Much, much more needs to be said. The American public’s awareness, understanding, and information regarding mental illness is woefully lacking and outdated.

Let’s look at a few facts regarding mental illness.

Mental illness is a brain disorder. Compare it to diabetes, an endocrine system disorder; or asthma, a respiratory system disorder. Like others, it is a treatable disorder.

Mental illness affects one in five families.

Mental illness most frequently strikes between ages 18-22.

The incidence of violence among the mentally ill is no higher than the general population. It is negligible among those receiving treatment.

Seeking treatment or receiving treatment for a mental illness should not be a CEM (Career Ending Move). Pilots taking anti-depressants are now allowed to fly.

Marijuana is not an innocuous substance. It produces permanent changes in the brain and can be a precipitating factor.

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... PARKING STUDY continued from page 1

than those already on Main Street; and a tree that a UPS truck could pass underneath.

The planters to house the trees were also discussed – the estimated cost for 11 planters strategically placed at the tip of certain parking lots to offset ones already in place – is $55,000. That cost includes a six-inch high concrete curb and gutter and grates around the tree trunks. The planters will not be in lieu of any parking spaces.

Commissioners agreed to a mid-block crosswalk, possibly in the vicinity of the town-owned property in front of the old Galax Theater, and extending the crosswalk directly across the street from that point. This was considered a good idea because the crosswalk could direct visitors to the public bathrooms proposed in Town Square, a short distance away.

An additional safety issue, commissioners hoped the crosswalk will entice people to cross the street at that point there rather than “every which way” as they do now. They acknowledged this concept could cause problems because it’s likely up to four parking places could be lost – though that number could be less.

Commissioner Gary Drake wanted everyone to know that he was not for the idea solely because of the potential parking space loss.

“I’m for the trees and planters but not the mid-block crosswalk,” he said. “There’s a retail value of a parking space is $120,000 a year.”

Commissioner Dotson said the merchants who will likely complain are the ones directly in front of the crosswalk, but that also means pedestrians will enter and leave the crosswalk directly in front of their stores, which could be a good thing.

Commissioners also discussed making Spring Street between Fourth and Fifth a one-way street and building a curb, gutter and sidewalk with parking along one side of the street.

The board didn’t decide which direction to make the street – some people want it to go the same direction as Church Street; others believe two adjacent one-way streets should be counterflow to each other.

Commissioner Dennis DeWolf said he’s heard that people want it to be a counterflow situation. They decided a decision on the direction could be taken up at a later date. The project will cost $110,000. Some say it shouldn’t happen unless a round-about is installed at NC 28 and S. 4th Street.

A node of some kind was also discussed at Fourth and Main at the proposed T-Shirt Factory location.

...FIRE DEPT. continued from page 1

pursues a lower insurance rating for the entire fire district as well as help respond to fire and rescue calls.

Including all calls – Fire & Related and Rescue & First Responder — there was an increase in 911 calls in 2010 over 2009; 65 more fire and related calls and 26 more rescue and first-responder calls.

Fire-related calls inside the town limits increased by 37%; 63% outside the town limits. Estimated fire loss inside the town limits was $4.7 million; estimated fire loss outside the town limits was $2.7 million.

Rescue and First Responder calls inside the town limits increased 35%; 65% outside the town limits.

With the economy this past year, and jobs hard to come by, it’s been hard to ask our volunteers to come out on all the calls,” said Chief Manley. “During the day 10 might come and at night 18 might come. There are 28 members, and that represents an increase over last year, the department is still two members short of its 30-member goal.

Manley said Standard Operating Procedure requires that two firemen be on a truck before rolling to a call. Another full-time employee would enable the two men at the station to handle the call and then if volunteers are needed, they can be called.

The person will be needed 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, must have five years experience with the department, have a CDL license and be first-responder certified.

All the money spent at the fire department comes solely from the fire tax whose rate is determined by the department and OK’d by the Town Board before it is sent to the Macon County Fire Commission’s director Warren Cabe who must then get the final OK from the county commission each year.

The amount allocated Highlands for FY 2010-2011 is $339,880.

The amount is derived from the fire tax rate of .009, which means makes for a $3.7 billion income for the Fire Department.

Commissioner Dotson said the merger plans for 5, 10 and 15% cuts may look good on paper, but in reality, the average cuts are making for a $3.7 billion income for the Fire Department.

The board didn’t decide which direction to make the street – some people want it to go the same direction as Church Street; others believe two adjacent one-way streets should be counterflow to each other.

Commissioner Dennis DeWolf said he’s heard that people want it to be a counterflow situation. They decided a decision on the direction could be taken up at a later date. The project will cost $110,000. Some say it shouldn’t happen unless a round-about is installed at NC 28 and S. 4th Street.

A node of some kind was also discussed at Fourth and Main at the proposed T-Shirt Factory location.

“Weneed to beautify that intersection,” said Patterson. “There is a lot of wasted space there, too, and it might be where we can gain a parking place or two, as well as make up for any loss due to a crosswalk.”

Commissioners agreed a professional street-scape engineer might be needed to help with that particular intersection.

The two items that could be completed right away were a painted sidewalk along the street-side edge of the Mountain Fresh parking lot and signage requiring right turn only onto to Main Street from Third Street.

Kim Lewicki

Highlands Storage Village
828-526-4555 • Cashiers Road

... BOE from page 1

2011 which equal $1.3 billion; budget non-recurring cuts of $300 million; the required funding for state health plans and state retirement plan totaling $500 million – all of which means makes for a 2011-12 deficit of $3.7 billion.

“For the third year in a row, public school budgets have been cut but given the current state of affairs, from the state’s point of view, with approximately 40% of the state’s overall budget tied up in public schools, it’s tough to reach spending targets without impact to public schools,” said Brigman.

Basic Facts

State funds total about $7.2 billion of public school funding — about 65% of the money schools spend to operate each year.

The rest of the money school systems rely on to operate come from their respective counties called Local Funds which typically make up 25% for a school system’s budget. Another 10% comes from the Federal government.

Recently Governor Bev Perdue made two announcements — there will be no extension of temporary taxes will be in the Governor’s budget; and all state agencies are to submit plans for 5, 10 and 15% cuts

So what does that mean for K-12 education in North Carolina in terms of dollars cut? A 5% cut would equal $394,485,753; a
A popular than ever this year and has been a major cash cow for network and satellite television.

This weekend’s fantastic pair of games certainly did nothing to change the perception that the NFL is at the top of the sporting world right now, and as we prepare for a Super Bowl featuring two of the most storied franchises in league history, let’s look at some of the reasons for the NFL’s place at the top.

First and foremost, the NFL is hugely popular right now thanks to the tremendous amount of parity that exists in the league. Whereas Major League Baseball is primarily about the New York Yankees and the Boston Red Sox, the National Football League has seen plenty of change at the top. In the past 10 years alone there have been 10 different representatives from the NFC in the Super Bowl. Even perennial also-ran franchises such as the Arizona Cardinals and the beloved New Orleans Saints have obtained NFC Championships during this period while MLB franchises such as the Pittsburgh Pirates and Kansas City Royals have wallowed in misery. This phenomenon is primarily due to the salary cap, which allows teams to rebuild much faster than in baseball and even the NBA.

Another factor helping with parity in the NFL is the amount of talent available in the draft each year and franchises that can discover “diamonds in the rough.” For example, the Saints Super Bowl run was fueled not only by Drew Brees and Reggie Bush, but also 7th round WR Marques Colston, 3rd and 4th round offensive linemen Carl Nicks and Jahri Evans, an undrafted free agent lineman in Anthony Hargrove and a rookie kicker in Garrett Hartley. These types of signings turned a franchise around in a hurry in a way that does not occur often in other leagues.

The other primary reason for the NFL’s success may seem like the opposite of parity, but while the NFC has shown tremendous parity, the AFC has been dominated in recent years by three franchises that have created a standard for consistent greatness.

The New England Patriots, Pittsburgh Steelers and Indianapolis Colts have provided consistency in the league and have been successful enough to provide a “favorite” for each year. Every great underdog story has its superpower that every team is gunning for, and the Patriots, Steelers and Colts have provided that throughout the past ten years. These three great teams have won enough to provide the challenge, but they have also lost enough to keep things interesting and to promote the image of parity that the league has been identified with in recent years.

In closing, I find it simply amazing that a franchise with the storied history of Green Bay will have had 15 years since its last Super Bowl appearance. In ten days they will face the Pittsburgh Steelers, winners of two Super Bowls since 2005 and the most successful franchise in the NFL since the merger. At this point I don’t want to fancy a guess as to who will win, but I know this much… the world will tune in to find out.

**HIGHLANDS SCHOOL BASKETBALL**

**Lady Highlanders win two**

By Ryan Potts

The Highlands Lady Highlanders defeated Swain County and Hayesville this weekend before dropping a hard-fought conference matchup to Hiwassee Dam on Tuesday.

Friday night, Highlands traveled to Bryson City to face Swain County and came away with a 49-41 victory. Emily Munger led the Lady Highlanders with 17 points and Taylor Buras added 12.

Saturday night, the Lady Highlanders hosted Hayesville and built an early lead that they would never relinquish. Marlee McCall scored 17 for Highlands, and Munger and Buras added 17 and 11 respectively.

Tuesday night Highlands faced archival Hiwassee Dam in a huge conference showdown. While the Lady Highlanders built a lead of 8 points on several occasions, the hot shooting of the Lady Eagles was able to counter each Highlands run. Late in the game the Lady Eagles hit several three pointers to finish up a 56-48 final score.

Hiwassee Dam finished the game hitting 10 three pointers. Emily Munger scored 29 for Highlands and Courtney Rogers scored 11.

The Highlander boys participated in a pair of thrilling games over the weekend, the first coming in Bryson City as the Highlanders trailed by as many as 14 points and by 5 points with just 40 seconds to play. However, 5 straight points from Josh Delacruz set the stage for Sophomore Taylor Osteen, who managed to rebound his own miss and score at the buzzer to give Highlands a 59-58 victory. Delacruz led Highlands with 19 points.

On Saturday, Highlands found themselves on the other side of the coin, as they led throughout the game against a tough Hayesville team but lost on a shot at the buzzer when a loose ball found its way into the hands of a Yellow Jacket player. Delacruz led Highlands with 15 in the 42-40 loss.

Tuesday, Highlands hosted conference foe Hiwassee Dam and played well early, trailing 13-11 at the end of the first quarter. However, a 4-point second quarter doomed the Highlanders, as they failed to score consistently in a 58-39 defeat. Delacruz scored 12 and Michael Shearl added 11 in the defeat.
Cosmetic problems of the eyelids

By Dr. Robert Buchanan
Center for Plastic Surgery

Cosmetic remodeling and rejuvenation of the eyelids has changed dramatically in the last few years as we have better defined the anatomy of the area, the forces on these and how changes occur over time. This has allowed us to develop better techniques that provide results that are more natural.

Both aging and inheritance cause cosmetic problems of the eyelids. Those due to aging are, by far, the most common. They result from changes in both the lids themselves and the surrounding tissues. Unfortunately, until very recently, all modification of this area was to treat the external appearance, not to correct the cause, return the tissues to their natural positions, or provide support against further change.

Direct aging of the eyelids results in loose, crinkly skin with all the other signs of aging that the skin in general exhibits. All the other changes are due to aging of the surrounding structures. Several things determine the eventual appearance. The most obvious is gravity. It, and the muscles surrounding and within the lids, constantly pull on the lids and the tissues around the eyes. How these respond depend on the strength of the support structures and their attachments.

The two muscles most responsible for the appearance around the eyelids are the same ones that make us look angry and/or tired. They cause lines between the brows, and in the medial lid area and, because of deep attachments medially, the brow to fall more laterally. This worsens the wrinkled appearance laterally and pushes the brow into the upper lid, causing loss of youthful definition of the area.

As gravity pulls on the lower lids, ligaments to the underlying bone cause bulging of the orbital tissue, including fat, and flattening of the cheek.

The fat, and even the bone of the orbit, atrophy with age. This adds to the cosmetic deformity. Previous techniques to rejuvenate the eye removed the fat that appeared to be bulging. Since that was not really the problem, and the residual fat and other tissues continued to atrophy, the eye eventually looked sunken and hollow.

The last change of aging of the lids is stretch of the tendon that attaches the lateral corner of the lids to the bone. This causes the eye to appear less wide and rounder.

To reverse these changes, we first look at what has caused your problem. If the brow is the cause of your upper lid problems, then a brow lift may be all that is needed. If there is still too much skin in the upper lid, then removal of the excess usually solves the problem. Previously, when we avoided the brow and just removed skin and fat, we actually made the problem worse, since removing enough skin to make a difference, actually pulled the brow down further.

Instead of removing fat as we did until just a few years ago, I use the fat to fill areas of tissue loss. In the lower eyelids, instead of simply removing what appeared to be excess skin from below the lids, I now remove it mainly beside the eye after elevating the eyelid and the entire cheek. This tissue is stabilized to the bone to keep it from falling again. The corner of the eye is also resuspended to bone in its normal position. This not only returns the youthful appearance to the eye, but is safer than the older procedures.

Congenital problems are due mainly to abnormalities in the amount of fat in the lids or the way the upper lid muscles attach to the skin. Fat can be either too plentiful or lacking. Lack of proper muscle attachment causes droop of the lid or an exaggerated orbital appearance. The problem determines the correction.

Eyelid rejuvenation is one of the most common procedures Dr. Buchanan does. Cosmetic consultations are complimentary at the Center for Plastic Surgery in Highlands. To learn more visit www.PlasticSurgeryToday.com, or www.TodaysFacelift.com. You can contact Dr. Buchanan at 828-526-3783.

Dr. Joseph H. Wilbanks, D.D.S.
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and of course Fillings and Cleanings! (IV Sedation, too)
Ongoing

• At Health Tracks at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, various exercise classes all week long. Call 828-526-41FT.
• 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)
  • 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 Episcopal 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.
• 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 & Fridays
• Open AA meeting at noon at the Episcopal Church at Fifth and Main streets.
• 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 and children ten or older are welcome but no pets please.

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 Shonoff Baptist Church. Breakfast is at 9 a.m. Meeting is at 10 a.m. All veterans are invited to attend.

Saturdays
• At Pailette’s Restaurant, intimate Wine Tasting at the bar at 1 p.m. 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 Cy’s International Restaurant, live music beginning at 9 p.m. No cover.

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 Pediatric Associates of Franklin, help Girls’ Program 6-7:30p.m Boys Program 7:45-9p.m. Registration is required as space is limited. Call 524-3314.

Tuesday, Feb 1
• The Highlands Dialogue Winter/Spring Discussion Series continues with Infidel and Nomad by Hirsi Ali. Handouts are available at the Hudson Library in the “Community Box” and 3 copies of Infidel and 1 copy of Nomad are available through the Fontana Regional Library. Isabel Allen will coordinate the discussion. The Highlands Dialogue’s Tuesday discussions are held at the Civic Center from 10–11:30 a.m. For more information about the Highlands Dialogue or any of our upcoming discussions, please e-mail John Gaston johngaston@aol.com or Karen Hawk hwknrcw@earthlink.net.

Friday, Feb. 4
• American Red Cross Blood Drive at Lowe’s of Franklin, Georgia Highway, Franklin, 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. 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 p.m.; 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.

Tuesday, Feb 8
• At The Highlands Dialogue’s Tuesday discussion, Karen Hawk: “The Bunga: Anti Slavery or Pro-Choice?” article from Sept/Oct 2010 The Humanist — handout. Handouts will be available at the meeting previously to the discussion (if not sooner) and at the Hudson Library in the Community Box available during library hours. The Highlands Dialogue’s Tuesday discussions are held at the Civic Center from 10–11:30 a.m. For more information about the Highlands Dialogue or any of our upcoming discussions, please e-mail John Gaston johngaston@aol.com or Karen Hawk hwknrcw@earthlink.net.

Friday, Feb. 11
• Valentine’s Dinner and Dance, 6-9 p.m. at Highlands Country Club’s Hudson House. Line Dance and Swing Dance Lessons after dinner. All ages welcome. Buy tickets early or buy that night! Children $5, Adults $10. Call 787-1958 for info.

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 Quartzmine Gap to Rock Gap in the Standing Indian Area. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin (opposite Burger King) at 10AM; drive 26 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.

Feb. 19-April 2
• At The Bascom, view Regional Art Leagues annual exhibition. Call 526-4949 for more information.


**PULL OUT**

On going and Upcoming Events

**Saturday, Feb.19**
- Chess and Checkers Challenge at the Rec Park 1-4 p.m. Come support Highlands School's 5th Grade Class. The class is earning money for its annual 5th grade trip to Charleston, SC. “Can you beat a 5th grader?” Sign up early to reserve your game! $20 entrance fee (plus $5 if you lose!). Call 787-1958 for info.
- Birdhouse Auction and Final Bidding/Silent Auction at the Rec Park. Personally designed and decorated, these bird houses are on display now at local banks. Bid now at silent auctions.

**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.

**Wednesday, Feb. 23**
- The Highlands Dialogue’s Tuesday discussion, Peter Ray: Doonesbury: A 40 Year Retrospective. Handouts will be available at the meeting previous to the discussion (if not sooner) and at the Hudson Library in the Community Box available during library hours. The Highlands Dialogue’s Tuesday discussions are held at the Civic Center from 10–11:30 a.m. For more information about the Highlands Dialogue or any of our upcoming discussions, please e-mail John Gaston johngaston@aol.com or Karen Hawk hwkncrw@earthlink.net.

**Thurs.-Sun., Feb. 24-27**
- The Highlands/Cashiers Players present “You Know I Can’t Hear You When The Water’s Running,” at the Martin-Lipscomb Performing Arts Center at 7:30 p.m. and 2:30 on Sunday.
- 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/Star Step Falls. Mostly gentle slopes, but also a couple of steep assents 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 Kay Coriell at 743-6977 for reservations. Visitors are welcome but no pets please.

**Saturday, 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 p.m. 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.

**Sunday, March 8**
- At The Highlands Dialogue’s Tuesday discussion, Lewis Doggett: The Red Book; Carl Jung’s Diary of the Unconscious (Note: 1 copy available through the Fontana Regional Library). Handouts will be available at the meeting previous to the discussion (if not sooner) and at the Hudson Library in the Community Box available during library hours.

**First Winter Barn Dance at The Bascom draws an energetic crowd!**

On January 22, the community came out for a fun-filled night of music, dancing at The Bascom’s first Winter Barn Dance honoring police officers, firefighters and EMS is destined to redesign the world, creating everything anew. His architectural achievements were often overshadowed by the turbulence of his melodramatic life. This riveting film brings Wright’s unforgettable story to life. Admission is free. During Highlands’ Romance Weekend, January 28-29, Greg Newington returns to The Bascom with Photography for Lovers. Capturing something you love about your beloved, learn how to add a sense of romance to your photos using light, filters and Photoshop.

This winter, the Youth Art program schedule at The Bascom includes “Saturday Art School” from Jan 29-February 10 from 10 am-12 noon; “Tuesday After School Art” through February 15 from 3:15-4:30 pm; and “Paint Like a Master” Thursdays, through March 10 from 3:15-5 pm.

The Bascom is open year round. Winter dates are from January 7- April 2. 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 726-4949.

Highlands celebrated with a gathering of music and dancing at The Bascom’s first Winter Barn Dance of the season. The Bascom is open year round. Winter dates are from January 7- April 2. 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 726-4949.

**HCPs “I Can’t Hear You ...” set to open Thurs., Feb. 24**

The Highlands/Cashiers Players are hard at work for the upcoming production of “You Know I Can’t Hear You When The Water’s Running,” by Robert Anderson. Cast and crew have been selected, and all have busy rehearsing, planning, designing, constructing and directing for two weeks now, and on track for another outstanding play. The show is a collection of four vignettes, all with varying degrees of comedy and drama.

The large cast is made up of numerous faces that will be familiar to anyone who attends theatre anywhere in the area, everyone in this cast has spent an awful lot of time playing “Dress Up”, more so than your average adult. The lengthy list includes Ralph Stevens, David Spivey, Stuart Armor, Michelle Holt, Jennifer Royce, Laura Zepeda, Wayne Coleman, Ronnie Sipliton, and Virginia Talbot. Assuming that leaves any one left to be in the audience, this crowd of actors will be bringing you both laughter, tears, and more than a few “I’ve been there” moments.

Several of the actors will be playing more than one character, giving them a chance to show off their talents, and possibly alarming the audience with just how easy some people can convincingly portray radically different personalities. You’ll be seeing a bit more of some actors than others, as they work together to bring Robert Anderson’s script to life.

Performances will run February 24 through the 27th, and March 4th through the 6th, at the Martin-Lipscomb Performing Arts Center, on Chestnut Street, in Highlands, NC.

For more information call 787-1958.
Here are a couple of verses:
entitled “You Can’t Be a Beacon if Your Light Don’t Shine.”

country song Suzanne Prentice came out with some years ago.

During this season of Epiphany, I am reminded of the
come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy:

from Matthew, what we are seeking in our own spiritual

stalemate, a loved one has died and so has your future, your

what Robert Frost described as the “slow, smokeless burning

arctic cold and record floods to know what it means to be

telling them to get up and get on with their lives because

Of your hopes and dreams dashed because the promise

of being home was growing dimmer and dimmer. Isaiah was

having their hopes and dreams dashed because the promise

that enslavement with your head down and shoulders

because you think you’re good for nothing. You are enslaved

prophet, so you seem bent on fulfilling that prophecy

you would have is not the one you are living.

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our

darkness that most frightens us.

Deeply fear is that we are

powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our
darkness that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous,
talented, fabulous? Actually,

who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your
... LETTERS continued from page 6

in a mental illness, especially schizophrenia. Providing more psychiatric beds and outpatient community support is an economic imperative for the consumer and not an expense. Treatment is much more expensive in an inappropriate setting than in a hospital. Involuntary community commitment is not a formidable process. The process does have safeguards to protect civil liberties. Anyone who thinks an individual is a danger to himself or others can start the commitment process simply by contacting the Magistrate, available in the County Courthouse during the day or through the Sheriff's office after hours.

If you or a loved one suffers from depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), schizophrenia or other mental disorder, you are not alone. Help is available. Addressing the problems surrounding mental illness has made great strides in the last few years, especially in our local area. We now have a “Mental Health Task Force” implemented by Commissioner Barden and Sheriff Holloway. An active local affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) offers a support group, classes for families, CIT training, and is planning a Peer-to-Peer crisis response vehicle. NAMI also offers a speaker’s bureau for groups, classes and organizations. Support classes and CIT training are now available to all citizens of the county jail.

The organization of Smoky Mountain LME (Local Management Entity) with new leadership and structure to include services from Appalachian Community Services and Meridian has made help, support, and medication management more accessible and appropriate. A 24-hour Peer-to-Peer Crisis Unit is available through Smoky Mountain LME to respond to crisis situations. We have a unit locally. The Macon County Library provides a wealth of books on mental illness designed for the general public, and individuals with a mental illness (Consumers) and families coping with an ill or child’s illness. NAMI Appalachian South in conjunction with Smoky Mountain and SCC has held 40 hours of CIT training with the CIT training.

...PLANNING BOARD continued from page 1

...LETTERS page 14

Ann Nandrea Franklin, NC

P.S. For more information about the Family-to-Family or the Peer-to-Peer curriculum, the NAMI Support Group, or a speaker, contact me, Ann Nandrea 369-7385

Tucson not Tea Party’s fault

Dear Editor,
The recent tragedy in Arizona resulting in loss of life and injury to so many people was horrible. For one person to have caused such pain is beyond belief. What made the event even worse, if possible, were the immediate conclusions being made attributing the attack to political vitriol, violent language and the Tea Party movement. Ascribing malicious and dangerous motives to a grassroots group is, at best, mistaken, and at worst, an effort to quash healthy discourse by demonizing one’s adversaries.

Since the Tea Party has been growing in number and influence, we have been called red-necked, rebellious and racists, among many other even more vicious names. At the same time, we have been called “the Constitution” and “the Constitution”. We have been called by demonizers of one’s adversaries.

What made the event even worse, if possible, were the immediate conclusions being made attributing the attack to political vitriol, violent language and the Tea Party movement. Ascribing malicious and dangerous motives to a grassroots group is, at best, mistaken, and at worst, an effort to quash healthy discourse by demonizing one’s adversaries.

Since the Tea Party has been growing in number and influence, we have been called red-necked, rebellious and racists, among many other even more vicious names. At the same time, we have been called “the Constitution” and “the Constitution”.

The end result was wishy-washy to say the least.

Marsh and Bryson voted against the ordinance outright.

Marsh said what he’s said all along – that the board that voted to change the form of government in the first place adopted the hybrid form of Council-Manager government because it felt the Police Chief and the Zoning Administrator should be hired and fired by the Town Board and not the Town Manager.

Attorney Coward said there was nothing in the minutes of 2008 indicating that was done on purpose. He suggested changing the ordinance to make the Town Manager in charge of everything and every...

...SPIRITUALLY from 12

playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us, it is in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

M y God's love surrounds you, may you find a brighter day.

May He grant you the peace you seek in every way.

God's light burns in each life, in yours and mine.

May He grant you the peace you seek in every way.

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God's light burns in each life, in yours and mine.
... LETTERS continued from page 13

tive group who believe in the process of our
government and our ability to have it work
for us.
So, when we listened to the Sheriff of Pima
County vein from his report, which should
have been an update on an investigation, to
personal comments about vtrio, Sharon
Angel, Sarah Palin, and Tea Parties, we were
surprised and hurt. To suddenly be placed
in the spotlight as possible contributors to
an act of insanity by negligent and irre-
 sponsible on the part of the Sheriff and led
to further division between people of differ-
ing political beliefs. We do not appreciate
the attempts by some representatives of our
government to use a horrible event to drive
a wedge between Americans.
Insanity has no bounds and needs no
reason. Any one event could be a trigger
that sets a deranged person on a violent
path. If there is any change that could be
made as a result of Jared Loughner’s hor-
rrendous act, let it be changes in the way
people handle those with possible psychi-
atriac needs.
Our elected officials should use the
common sense, with which they have
been attributed, to think before they speak. Judgments about a group of people about
which they seem many have no knowledge,
is unacceptable. The events of January 8,
2011 in Arizona not bring out the politi-
cal correctness police, causing reason-
able conversation with no evil intent to be
stifled. As a group, we will continue to ex-
cise our right to express our opinions, to
expect our elected officials to represent us,
the people, and to be treated with respect
that we are due as citizens of the
greatest country in the world. You are all
in our constant prayers that God will give you wisdom and discernment in your decision
making.
Thank you and may God Bless Ameri-
can
Gail Chapman
President
Mountain Patriots Tea Party

Please stop selling ‘Spice, K2’ and other
herbal incense products

Dear Editor,
I am writing Macon County business
owners to request that they voluntarily stop
selling “herbal incense” products marketed
under various names including Spice and
K2. As they should be aware, these products
are laced with powerful designer drugs,
which are synthetic cannabinoids, and
adults and minors are smoking these prod-
ucts instead of using them as “incense.”
Both locally and nationally there are
increasing incidents of young people end-
ing up in emergency rooms or worse after
smoking these products. This is the result
of adverse health reactions to the designer
drugs/synthetic cannabinoids that are con-
tained in the “herbal” product. As I have
said, this is occurring locally and includes
minors purchasing these products at busi-
nesses throughout Macon County.

On Nov. 24 2010, the U.S. Drug En-
forcement Agency announced it would
make five synthetic cannabinoids sched-
uled drugs illegal within a month using
emergency powers. Several states have also
made them illegal under state law and the
NC Legislature is considering doing this as
well.

Again, I am asking are business own-
ers to voluntarily comply with my request
for the good of our community and espe-
cially our younger citizens. While I am
writing you in my official capacity, I am
not implying that there will be any legal re-
purcussions if you choose not to honor my
request, unless or until NC state law is
changed.

While there is currently no NC state
law that would require the elimination of
these products from store owners’ invento-
ry, they should seek independent legal ad-
vise regarding potential Federal criminal
charges as well as potential civil claims
from parents and consumers or their es-
teates.

Macon County Sheriff
Robert L. Holland

Understand the implications of the
Wilderness’ label as outlined in the
Wilderness Act of 1964

Dear Editor,
The proposed Zahner Wilderness in
the Overlook area needs an additional
2,000 acres to qualify as a 5,000 acre wil-
derness area or justification for the smaller
size. The existing road needs to be closed
and allowed to return to natural state. No
motorized vehicles, planes, or chain saws
are allowed, except for medical emergencies
or spraying insect infestations. No me-
chanical transport bans the use of mountain
bikes or wagons in wilderness. The Sec-
retary of Agriculture is to give public notice
and hearing for additions to wilderness ar-
reas (Section 5 (b)).
The source of the following excerpts
are from the Wilderness Act of 1964 which
can be found at http://www.wilderness.net/
index.cfm?fuse=NWPS&sec=legisAct#4

The excerpt include definition of wil-
derness, permitted uses and prohibitions.
Sections relating to maintenance by

Dept. of Agriculture, review, changes in
boundaries, and land exchanges have been
omitted.

Definition of Wilderness (section 2c):
A wilderness, in contrast with those areas
where man and his works dominate
the landscape, is hereby recognized as
an area where the earth and its community
of life are untrammeled by man, where
man himself is a visitor who does not re-
main. An area of wilderness is … an area of
undeveloped Federal land retaining its pri-
meval character and influence, without
permanent improvements or human habi-
tation, … which (1) generally appears to
have been affected primarily by the forces
of nature, with the imprint of man’s work
substantially unnoticeable (2) has out-
standing opportunities for solitude or a
primitive and unconfined type of recre-
ation; (3) has at least five thousand acres
of land or is of sufficient size to make prac-
tical its preservation and use in an unim-
paired condition; and (4) may also contain
ecological, geological, or other features
of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical
value.

Use of Wilderness Areas (section 4a
and 4b)
The purposes of this Act are hereby de-
dared to be within and supplemental to
the purposes for which national forests
and national wildlife refuge systems:
… Except as otherwise provided in this
Act, wilderness areas shall be devoted to
the public purposes of recreational, scenic,
scientific, educational, conservation, and his-
torical use.

Prohibition of Certain Uses (Section
4c)
… There shall beno commercial enter-
prise and no permanent road within any
wilderness area designated by this Act and,
except as necessary to meet minimum re-
quirements for the administration of the
area for the purpose of this Act… there
shall beno temporary road, no use of mo-
tor vehicles, motorized equipment… no
other form of mechanical transport, and
no structure or installation within any such
area.

Special Provisions (section 4d, 52 and
56)
… Nothing in this Act shall prevent
within national forest wilderness areas any
activity, including prospecting, for the pur-
pose of gathering information about min-
eral or other resources, if such activity is
carried on in a manner compatible with
the preservation of the wilderness environ-
ment

… Commercial services may be per-
formed within the wilderness areas design-
ated by this Act to the extent necessary for
activities which are proper for realizing the
recreational or other wilderness purposes of
the areas.

Nathalie Sato
Highlands

Did Keener see it?

Dear Editor:
In reference to Audrey Keener’s letter
in the Thursday, Jan. 20, edition entitled,
“Wannabees”

Ms. Keener, you presented a formula
for determining whether something is
“truth or hearsay.” “Unless you have seen
it with your own eyes and know it to betru,
Don’t write it up as truth and don’t repeat it
and open up a big can of worms with it.”

Please be specific that you saw this
incident personally and are sure that it is
true: a bear “coming across a six-foot chain
link fence, attack[ing] your dogs and com-
[ing] right on into your home when they
smell chicken being cooked for diner.”

Please also state whether you mean to
imply (and whether you know this first-
hand) that local bear hunters shoot only
“nuisance bears” and not nature bears,” as
defined in your letter.

From one who desires that all bears
remain “nature bears.”

Avary Doubleday
Highlands

Hospital staff learns SafeServe practices

Last week, Highlands-Cashiers Hospital
offered its staff and area healthcare workers
from Swain, Polk, and Transylvania coun-
ties an educational food safety training se-
minar lead by US Foods Healthcare and Educa-
tion Account Manager, Margret Downs.
Upon completion of the course and satisfac-
tory test scores, participants earned their
ServSafe certification, a nationally recog-
nized accreditation by The Food Safety Ad-
miration.

HCH’s Nutritional Services manager,
Kathy Owens said “The course teaches the
latest knowledge concerning food safety, per-
sonal hygiene, cross-contamination and al-
lergens, proper cooking times and tempera-
tures, and cleaning and sanitation techniques.
At our hospital, it’s our top concern to insure
that those meals are prepared with the high-
est safety and sanitation standards.”

Facilities who maintain their ServSafe
accreditation are given the opportunity to
earn two additional points during North Car-
olina’s Annual Food Service Sanitation Exam.
Recertification is required every three years.
changed. They believe fall and (and any subsequent Town Manager) needs ultimate and complete control over all matters of Highlands, if he is to do his job well...

In a prepared statement read at the Jan. 12 Town Board meeting, Commissioner Dennis DeWolf said, “...this is a summation of my thoughts and conversations with many friends outside of our community, which after further research I discovered are very much aligned with many of the statements made in the Municipal Government in North Carolina second edition... entitled “Governance in Council-Manager Cities.” What DeWolf failed to disclose— but which was disclosed by Town Attorney Bill Coward at the Jan. 24 Planning Board meeting—is that the author of the book, David Lawrence, said that Council-Manager forms of government in North Carolina are varied. He said the definition of the Town Manager’s duties can depend on the history of a town, on the personalities involved— a number of issues.

Furthermore, what DeWolf, and Rogers have completely disregarded is the wishes of the people of Highlands who elected them to office. It is their bidding they should do — not one’s — not that of “friends outside of our community,” not statements in a book on the subject and especially not what their egos demand or their personal agendas require.

Planning Board members— who by law must make recommendations on amending the ordinance regarding the town charter because of their relationship with the Zoning watershed Stormwater Administrator— said every person who approached them on the subject prior to the Jan. 24th meeting was against giving the Town Manager ultimate control.

Attorney Coward and Commissioner Drake have both said people should only consider the position and not the person currently holding the position of Town Manager. But in all fairness, that’s all the people of Highlands have to work with—that’s all they know when it comes to the new Council-Manager form of government and like it or not the actions of 2010 and early 2011 and the personalities behind those actions weigh heavily on citizens’ minds.

As Commissioners Amy Patterson and John Dotson reiterated at the Jan. 19 Town Board meeting, “The possibility of a Town Manager being unfamiliar with the intricacies of Highlands is about 100%,” said Dotson. “Therein lies the danger.”

Patterson said the Town Manager may not have a feel for the pulse of our small town. “It’s the folks who are elected who should have the pulse,” she said.

At no time in its history has Highlands been “like any other town” and that’s what the Town Board should remember. Without the Town Board’s oversight, the Town Manager can hire anyone he wants, determine their compensation and he can fire anyone he wants by simply consulting with the Town Board in closed session. That addition to the ordinance doesn’t say he has to do as they wish, even though Attorney Coward believes a Town Manager would be foolish not to follow the board’s wishes.

Patterson said the problem with that 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,” she said. “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.” This is what happened with Zoning Administrator Joe Cooley.

As evidenced by their ability to orchestrate vote changes, what’s happening under Highlands’ Council-Manager form of government is that the Town Manager and the Mayor have a very intimate relationship—which isn’t what the Council-Manager form of government is about—a least not as it’s defined in the General Statute.

The events of 2010 and early 2011, now beg the questions: Was Highlands ready for an authoritarian form of government— one that can be routinely manipulated by one person or is it too intimate a community, despite the number of employees, to work well under the one-man rule scenario— especially when that one man isn’t elected by the people?

So the citizens of Highlands (even those in ETJ) must decide if they want the state of their town to stay on the proverbial path it is now on, or do they want to take back control?

That control can come in the form of requesting the town return to its old hybrid form of Council-Mayor where the Town Board and the Mayor wield control with a Town Administrator at the helm rather than solely the Mayor; or it can request to continue the hybrid form of Council-Manager now in place, even request that the Town Manager’s duties be further diluted in whatever area the board chooses.

Citzens can also turn out for the Feb. 2 Public Hearing, where the Town Board will seek comments on whether it should amend the charter to replace the words “the Board” to “the Town Manager” throughout (127 instances in eight pages) and to include verbiage demanding that the Town Manager consult with commissioners during a closed session prior to firing an employee—a meeting about which the targeted employee may have no knowledge.

And specifically, relinquish the board’s control over the Zoning Administrator to the Town Manager.

The Police Chief’s position was relinquished to the Town Manager at the Jan. 19 Town Board meeting with a 3-2 vote to amend the ordinance. But it only stands if that vote is once again 3-2 in favor of amending the ordinance at the Feb. 2 meeting. Since the vote wasn’t 4-1, the question must be asked again at the following Town Board meeting. If the vote flips, then the ordinance will not be changed and the Town Board will have ultimate control over the Police Chief’s and the Zoning Administrator’s positions.

Citizens of Highlands—now is the time to speak out. If you want to take back your town, then let your voice be heard.

Call on the people you elected to govern and remind them it’s your voice they should be listening to, not their egos or the voices of friends in other communities.

Mayor
David Wilkes:
421-1187

Mayor Pro Temp
John Dotson:
526-5868

Commissioner
Amy Patterson:
526-2814

Commissioner
Dennis DeWolf:
526-3923

Commissioner
Gary Drake:
200-0062

Commissioner
Larry Rogers:
526-2874

• Police & Fire Dept. Reports •

Highlands PD log entries from Jan 21 Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class 3 misdemeanor, or public officials have been used.

Jan. 20
• Alette蟪n, 23, was arrested after midnight, officers assisted another agency and responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Satulah Road. It was false.

Jan. 21
• At 1:10 a.m., officers responded to a call for service at a residence on Cottage Row due to noise outside the window. A screen had come loose and was banging against the house.

Jan. 22
• At 3:51 a.m., officers responded to a domestic dispute between siblings at a residence on NC 106.

Jan. 24
• At 4:30 p.m., the dept. received a call about a lost ID card.

At 9 a.m., the dept. was called about a breaking and entering with larceny of the Highlands School’s mascot. A framed print of The Highlander was taken from the cafeteria. It is valued at $250.

During the week, police officers responded to 3 alarm and issued 5 citations.

Highlands F&R Dept. Log entries from Jan 19:

Jan. 19
• At 2:45 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm set off by workers at a residence on Club House Trail.

Jan. 20
• At 10:51 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to assist a woman who had fallen and broken her leg at a residence on Pioner Dr.

Jan. 22
• At 4:08 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a person who was unresponsive. There was no transport.

Larry Rogers Construction Company, Inc.
Serving Highlands and Cashiers from over 25 years
Excavating • Grading • Trucking Trackhoe
Backhoe • Blasting • Utilities
(828) 526-2874
776 Dillard Road • Highlands
... BOE continued from page 7

10% cut would equal $1,232,485,753; at 15% it's $1,226,971,506 and at 15% it's $1,621,457,259.

The potential impact down to $1,032,485,753 based on a 10% cut; and $1,821,457,259 based on a 15% cut.

Since the 1969-1970 school year, North Carolina has appropriated less and less money to its public school system.

For the 1969-1970 school year, the state's General Fund was spent on schools. For the 2009-2010 school year, the money allocated to the public school system represented 35% of the General Fund — $735 billion.

Contrary to the opinion of some, resources in North Carolina are already inadequate,” said Brimmer. “According to the most recent NEA rankings, North Carolina is considered a ‘low-spend state’ when it comes to education and ranks 42nd in the nation on what it spent per pupil on education — $6,743 as compared to the District of Columbia (Washington, DC) which spends $17,638 per student. The national average is $10,150 spent per pupil.

Answers to common questions.

So why are schools always on the chopping block? NC’s Public School Fund is the largest chunk of the state budget’s General Fund.

What about the lottery funds — won’t they help? Lottery funds do help — but they make up only about 3.9 percent of the budget. And, they’re designated for specific purposes — K-3 teachers, More at Four, school construction and scholarships.

Can’t we just cut administration and leave teachers alone? Eliminating all administration (NCDPI, central office staff and principals/assistant principals) would total $478 million — less than a third of the possible $1.6 billion in targeted cuts for K-12.

Why not cut out testing? Wouldn’t that save a lot of money? Cutting out all testing would save about $11 million — far short of our needed cuts. Also, remember, NC is required to do some testing under federal and state laws.

Wont’ the federal Race to the Top funds help solve our budget problem? Race to the Top is providing nearly $400 million over four years to North Carolina, but the funds are targeted for specific purposes and not for general use, and funds are at one time a location.

Unfortunately, just as NC schools are showing significant progress, the budget shortfall presents a significant gap, said Brimmer.

Over the next several months, as the School Boards across the state begin work on the budget for 2011-2012, worst case local option scenarios will be considered. Those will include across the board reductions; the cutting of all but essential positions; transportation efficiencies or elimination of programs; the elimination of athletic programs; and the consolidation and closing of facilities.

To prepare and combat the negative implications of the state’s likely cuts, Brimmer said he and his staff will become familiar with state level strategic cut options that have been identified to limit classroom impact, and maintain necessary infrastructure, will determine how state and local reductions will directly impact each of our schools, will communicate the impact, will stay informed through news media, NCDPI and various state associations, and will reach out to legislators and key stakeholders.

Since school systems aren’t revenue producing entities, they are completely dependent on federal, state and county funding. The financial challenges Macon County Schools can do at this point is try to be prepared for the best and worst case scenarios.

- Kim Lewicki

... PLANNING BOARD from 13

hiring and firing of the Zoning Administrator. I have a hard time putting that decision in one man, with only the “consulting” required.”

He also wanted to address the Police Chief’s position but Coward reminded him that the Planning Board was only to consider the portion of the ordinance dealing with the Zoning Administrator. “The law requires a recommendation from the Planning Board even though your vote is nonbinding” he said.

As his proxy, Craig tried to enter member John Underwood’s letter against changing the ordinance as a vote, but Coward said he couldn’t do that because Underwood wasn’t present to hear all the discussion.

Coward kept telling the Planning Board, that the Town Manager worked at the pleasure of the Town Board and if he didn’t do as they desired, or at least the majority desired, acknowledging all he would need is three friends on the board, that he could be fired.

Bryson said it was unlikely that the board would fire the Town Manager if he fired an employee because “the lower man on the totem pole would be told to hit the road before the board made the decision to fire the Town Manager. He would probably just get a black mark against his name.”

The board finally voted 2 to 2 to change the ordinance with the following comment entered into the record so the Town Board understands that the Planning Board members don’t like the proposed amendment and don’t have a positive feeling about it, but feel they don’t have any other options.

“We are of differing opinions and have serious concerns about the proposed amendment to the ordinance however, we understand the importance of the Town Manager form of government and the importance of having the Town ordinance and charter be in line.”

For the amendment to pass, the Town Board must vote 3-2 to change it as did at the Jan 19 Town Board meeting. The second required vote will be taken following the Public Hearing on the issue at 7 p.m. at the Feb. 2 Town Board meeting.
### Classifieds

#### Classifieds Policy

**Non-Commercial Classifieds:**
$6 for first 10 words; 20 cents per word thereafter.

**Commercial Classifieds:**
$6 for first 10 words; 25 cents per word thereafter.

**Email Copy To:**
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**Send Check To:**
Highlands’ Newspaper, P.O. Box 2703, Highlands, NC 28741, 828-526-0782

**VISA/MASTERCARD Accepted**

**DEADLINE:**
Mondays at 5 p.m.

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### Help Wanted

**Well Established Real Estate Company Seeking Qualified Brokers:**
Call Gina McDonald at Mountain View Properties at 526-8128 or send resume to P.O. Box 2259, Highlands, NC 28741. (st. 1/27)

**Multiple Positions Available at Mountain Fresh Grocery in Highlands:**
Deli, Grill and Cashier. Contact Jobed2@gmail.com

### Real Estate for Sale

**$103,000 Lower Clear Creek:**
5.5 miles from Main Street. 2 Lots. .55 & .95 acres. Septics installed. Borders National Forest. 2005 2bed, 2bath. Very cozy with fabulous view. Call 628-482-2052. (st. 11/11)

### Residential/Commercial for Rent

**Storage/Office Location for Rent:**
+/- 1,600 sq. ft., heat & air, bathroom, close to town. $700 per month. Call 828-526-8953.

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### Business News

**Macon Bank going public**

The Board of Directors of Macon Bancorp has unanimously adopted a plan to convert the company to stock ownership by offering shares of common stock to eligible depositors, as of Dec. 31, 2009, of Macon Bank, its subsidiary, to other depositors opening accounts after December 31, 2009; to the bank’s borrowers; to residents of the communities the bank serves; and to the general public.

The eligible depositors, other depositors and borrowers of the bank will have subscription rights in that order of priority: superior to non-customer residents of the bank’s communities and the general public. It is currently anticipated that Macon Bancorp’s offering of stock will commence April 2011.

The purpose of the conversion is to raise additional capital to be invested in the bank. Thus will allow the bank to enhance the services it provides to its customers, have greater flexibility in structuring its operations, support future growth in the bank’s communities, and consider expanding its operations into new markets.

The consummation of the conversion is subject to: approval of the plan by the members of Macon Bancorp by a majority vote; receipt of all required regulatory approvals; receipt of favorable tax opinions; and receipt and acceptance of subscriptions for shares of common stock with an aggregate purchase price within a range of the value of Macon Bancorp on an as converted basis to be established by an independent appraisal.

The conversion will not affect the bank’s relationship with its customers. Depositors will continue to hold accounts in the bank, insured by the FDIC, to the full extent legally possible, in the same amounts and with the same rates of return and general terms. The amounts, rates, maturities, collateral terms and other provisions of the loans of the bank to its borrowers will continue unchanged. The bank’s normal business operations will continue without interruption under its current policies and will be carried on in its existing offices by its present management and staff.

A proxy and prospectus will be sent to each member of Macon Bancorp as of a record date to be established for a special meeting of members to vote on the plan. The following documents will explain the plan and the proposed conversion in detail.

Macon Bank, Inc., is a North Carolina-chartered, locally owned and operated financial institution that focuses on full-service banking, including small business customers. The bank operates 11 offices in Western North Carolina. On December 31, 2010, the bank reported $1.012 billion in assets and 179 employees.

This notice of the proposed conversion of Macon Bancorp to stock ownership is neither an offer to sell nor a solicitation of an offer to buy shares of common stock. Any offer will be made only by the prospectus to be distributed at a later date. The securities to be offered by Macon Bancorp will not be deposited or accounts of Macon Bank and will not be insured or guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any other governmental agency.

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### Highlands-Cashiers Hospital

Fidella Eckard Living Center
US 64 Between Highlands & Cashiers, NC

### Positions Now Available

**ER and Med/Surg Registered Nurses**

**Scrub Tech**

Full benefits, or the option to opt out of benefits for an increase in pay, available after 60 days of full-time employment.

Pre-employment substance screening. Call Human Resources, 828-526-1376, or reply online at www.bc翰hopial.org.

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### Highlands' Newspaper - Thursday, Jan. 27, 2011 - Page 17
Students participate in National Smokey Bear Poster Contest

Students in Mrs. Donna Sizemore’s 1st grade class put the finishing touches on their Smokey Bear Posters last week. “We are so impressed with these posters,” said Dr. Becky Schilling of the Mountain Garden Club. The students met Smokey Bear when he visited their classroom on November 30. Before making posters, the students did additional research online about Smokey Bear and completed rough drafts of their poster designs. “The posters are so creative and show the students know what Smokey Bear says,” said Dixie Barton, also of the Mountain Garden Club. “We are very proud of each student who participated.”

This year is the 50th anniversary of the Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl poster contest, which is for students in grades 1-5. Entries must be sponsored by a garden club belonging to the National Garden Clubs, Inc. The deadline for entries was January 21.

The Mountain Garden Club applauds Mrs. Sizemore and her teaching assistant, Regina Marrone, for making this contest a fun way for students to gain new skills while learning important information about forests and the prevention of wildfires.

Highlands School calendar changes

• 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.
• The last day of school will be June 13 to make up Jan. 12.
HighlandsInfo.com
Weekly Events, News
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