

Highlands' Newspaper

FREE every Wednesday

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Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2012

Final word on electric rates coming next week

What it costs to purchase power from Duke, the town's operational expenses and the rate of return the town wants from selling power are the three components that will determine how much Highlands' electric rates

will increase — but the decision come until the next Town Board meeting, Tuesday, Jan. 18.

At the special Town Board meeting, Tuesday, Jan. 10, Public Service Administrator Lamar Nix presented a report comparing

Highlands' rates to three similar entities — other municipalities who sell power, co-ops, and investor-owned utilities like Duke Power.

He said even with his proposed 28% rate increase, High-

lands will be in the lower third compared to what other municipalities charge for electricity. An interesting fact, but one that will mean little to the citizens when they open their utility bills, said

• See ELECTRIC page 17

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Fences and lights considered

The proposed Fence and Outdoor Lighting ordinances were sent to the Appearance Commission by the Planning Board and discussed Monday night.

Due to the myriad of choices concerning fences — height, material, color, design, vegetation — they requested seeing ordinances on the books of other high-end, resort towns before delving too deeply into the draft presented.

All agreed that the fences that have popped up over the years along the routes leading in and out of Highlands serve a purpose — blocking light and noise — but they lack aesthetic value. Aesthetics is the main focus of the proposed ordinance that will eventually affect fences on all public roads in Highlands whether residential or commercial.

Town Planner David Clabo said he would bring examples of

• See FENCES page 11

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Form of gov't discussed ... again

At the Tuesday, Jan. 3 Town Board meeting, the issue of Highlands' form of government was brought up again, almost a year after it was first brought up in 2010.

Based on the information presented by Carl Stenberg with the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Government at the Jan. 8 special Town Board meeting, the easiest way to align Highlands' current form of government — hybrid Council-Manager — with the state charter, was through a Local Act.

A Local Act refers to an act of the General Assembly that relates to one or more specific local governments. Since, local governments derive all of their authority from state legislative enactments, the Local Acts are used to modify the general law by adding to the authority granted under those laws, or by creating exceptions to the requirements

• See GOVERNMENT page 11

FRI	SAT	SUN
36 19F	40 24F	39 23F

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• FORUM •

• HAWK'S EYE VIEW •

• LETTERS •

Have a little heart



**Kim Lewicki
Publisher**

On the front page of this issue, readers will learn what the Town Board decided to do about raising electric rates – not whether it will do it, but by how much.

Because the sitting board often-times resurrects issues already voted on, perhaps what follows on this page can be factored into another decision – should the board choose to rethink its electric rate policies.

Obviously, the raising of electric rates, which started two years ago and will continue from now on in various increments, couldn't come at a worse economic time in the nation, county, or town.

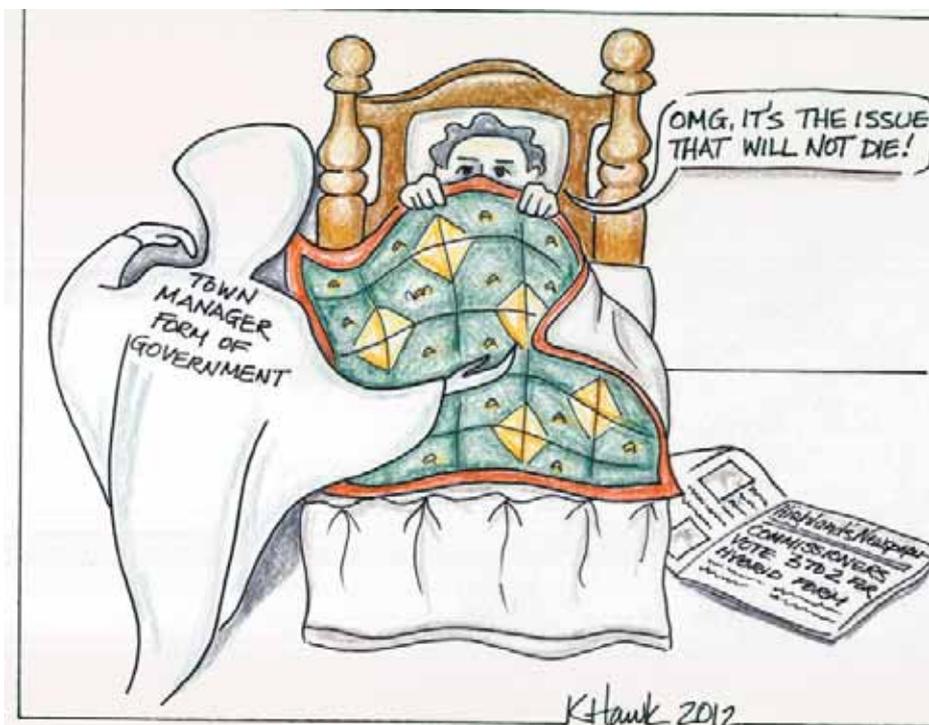
As Highlands' citizens crawl out of the 4-year recession hole toward a better 2012, they are being pushed back down due to excessive utility rates.

Yes, the rates the town charges for electricity are dependent on what Duke charges the town, but Duke isn't in charge, nor does it dictate how much the town makes on its Electric Fund.

For years, prior to Duke taking over Nantahala Power and Light, Highlands' electric rates held steady. Nantahala didn't raise Highlands' wholesale rate and so the town didn't raise its rates.

After Duke took over Nantahala, it took a while for Duke to turn its sights on Highlands and now that it has, Highlands' wholesale rates were increased to match the wholesale rates Duke charges other Electric Cities in North Carolina – cities who like Highlands resell Duke

•See FORUM page 14



LETTERS-TO-THE EDITOR-POLICY

We reserve the right to reject or edit submissions.

NO ANONYMOUS LETTERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

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

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To be clear

Dear Editor

As a rule, I never respond to letters concerning the stuff I write but Chaplain Margaret Howell's letter last week pointing out the many sins of Islam in comparison to Christianity was right on the money. But somehow I was left with the feeling that she thought I was honoring and preferred Islam to my own Christian faith. Not so. I have personally witnessed the cruelty of their religion.

While I'm not a "born again" Christian, mostly because I never died, I am in love with Jesus just the same. The purpose of the column titled "Oh, for Christ's sake" was to point out that Muslims consider us cursing our God as blasphemy and therefore, call us infidels....nothing more than that.

Fred Wooldridge
Highlands and
North Palm Beach

Prepare for catastrophe and be thankful for those who heed the call

Dear Editor:

This letter is a profound thank you to our dedicated volunteer firemen from both the Highlands and Satolah Fire Departments who responded to a fire in my kitchen yesterday. It is also a wake up call for 2012:

While preheating my oven, the heating element made a loud pop and started burning. Turning off the appliance didn't affect the burning and sparking. I panicked and called 911. Ben Owens and his partner from Satolah arrived first to my Blue Valley home, followed shortly by Chief Popcorn Manley and his crew from Highlands. After evacuating my pets from the house I called my neighbor Stacy Houston from Wilson Gas and he suggested that I switch off the breaker in the electrical panel box. In my panic, that didn't occur to me. I also grabbed a fire

•See LETTERS page 3

... LETTERS continued from page 2

extinguisher in the basement on my way back upstairs (It was expired & I didn't even think of the newer one in the kitchen.) Disconnecting the power to the oven extinguished the fire, thank goodness. The firemen arrived right afterward and checked out the scene.

In addition to my deep gratitude to the firemen and all who helped me, I'd like to remind those reading this to take a minute and make a mental and physical checklist for fire emergencies in 2012:

Review what to do in case of a fire in your home. Think about where the fire extinguishers are and check them out to see if they are still viable. Don't make my mistake. I had always had fire extinguishers, but had not thought to check out their efficiency in recent years. Look at the electrical panel and note where the appliance switches are located. As I reflect my emergency, I realize with embarrassment that I was in panic mode and not thinking clearly about what to do. After all, it had never happened before.

So thank you again, our wonderful firemen and all who helped me. Happy New Year.

Pam Brown
Highlands

Its midnight; do you know what your legislature is doing?

Dear Editor,

My grandmother always told me that, "nothing good happens after midnight." I

•See LETTERS page 4

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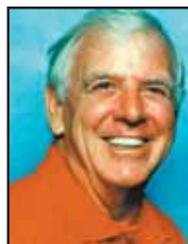
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• LAUGHING AT LIFE •

Going straight



Fred Wooldridge

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But while all these changes cost a fortune, the change that is the most puzzling and disruptive to me only costs a few bucks, the price of a pint of paint.

Here's what the town's traffic coneheads have come up with for 3rd and Main streets.

Now, when you are on 3rd Street approaching Main Street you're required to turn right

whether you are headed north or south. This is a part of a super diabolical plan to either further bog down Main Street or to keep people away from Main Street's "shopping district" to make visitors want to go home earlier than they do now after sitting in forever snail traffic.

Forget about putting a traffic signal or four-way stop sign at this intersection. That would be much too sensible. Instead, let's cram more cars onto Main Street. Actually, traffic will move so slow we should encourage passengers to get out and shop as traffic creeps along.

Since this boneheaded move is out of our hands, I'm blaming George Bush for his lack of vision. One would think the main idea would be to have most of the traffic traveling from point A to point B avoiding Main Street. A traffic signal at 3rd and Main streets with sensors in the street that change the light is much too easy a solution.

Here's my new plan of attack for this

summer, but don't tell the town 'cause it'll try to screw it up for me. I'll drive by the vacant old rundown now empty post office sight, cut through Highlands Plaza with more empty stores than not, endure the traffic humps (Am I allowed to say hump?) from hell, turn right and shoot across Main Street to Oak and onto the bypass. Then I'll hang a left onto US 64 and head for the Rec. Park or Cashiers where I waste my time playing bridge. TA DA!

*• Instead of freezing your butt off tonight, make a fire, curl up with your sweetie and read her Fred's new thriller, **Deceived** from your Kindle or Nook. You can also read Fred's foolishness in the Highlands Newspaper on-line all winter at www.highlandspaper.com*

... LETTERS continued from page 3

never quite grasped why until last week. While the vast majority of North Carolinians were sleeping, the radical Republican-controlled legislature was at it again. With zero notice and disallowing debate for a record 35th time this year, Republicans in the legislature convened at 12:45AM to remove the N.C. Association of Educators ability to have a dues check-off payroll deduction.

Why would they convene a post-midnight special session to attack school teachers? Simply, they saw an opportunity. With Representative Womble in critical, but stable condition after a tragic accident; and after Representative William Wainwright had to excuse himself due to a serious illness; Speaker Tillis could exploit their absence for an advantage albeit completely immoral. Constitutionality aside, no reasonable person would say convening a special midnight session in this manner is honest.

Rob Christensen has watched and/or covered every NC legislature since 1977, and said "I've never seen anything quite like last week's hijinks." Last year, Speaker Tillis said that "[Republicans] are living up to their commitment to be more transparent." How is this transparent? These are the exact antics that anger voters to the point of apathy. As for alleging that Democrats did the same thing when they were

• See LETTERS page 5

No, no, no, I'm not going straight! I promise I'll be weird till I'm fired. I'm talking about goin' straight at 3rd and Main St. Who wants to do that? HELLO....like me!

OK, so it's 2012 and our li'l town is

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changing faster than the Rockettes between numbers. Change is good, right? (Ha!)

By now, I'm sure our new town manager is saying, "What have I done? Honey, don't sell the house." Let's see, we're getting a brand new post office nobody wants, a new police station with a totally boring look, a refurbished library that is knock your socks off, a new bridge across a small creek we call Mirror Lake that took forever to build and a new sidewalk that nobody uses to The Bascom. Name two people who have used that sidewalk since it was built. Send pictures.

Oh and they should have rounded up the mules and hauled The Bascom Bridge over to Mirror Lake and saved a bundle. What is the name of that waterway running under The Bascom Bridge anyway?

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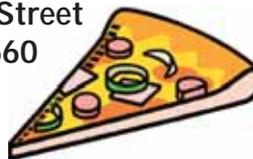
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• THE VIEW FROM HERE •

Who marries whom is not my business, or yours

I can't believe we are spending one second discussing the definition of marriage in the Republican Presidential debates. With a shrinking middle class, declining education, and soaring spending and debt, I think the country has bigger problems.

Government giveaways are based on government take-aways. We have reached the tipping point at which government can no longer take enough to satisfy its obligation. The result is massive debt, which as candidates correctly explain, will saddle future generations. President Obama recently announced plans to reign in military spending, an announcement which was predictably greeted with predictions of national collapse. We are far more likely to collapse under a mountain of debt than in response to Chinese aggression. We've committed to health to the poor and the elderly. In coming years that commitment is sure to be expanded. We've decided to pay for greater coverage for more citizens by paying less to those who provide it. If we want a formula for a sustainable system, we'd better look elsewhere.

Which brings us back to marriage. I just can't believe that permitting a person to marry the person he or she loves is going to harm the country. Why is it a problem that Bill's Social Security payments go to Jim instead of Sally? If a company provides family health benefits to its employees, why should Janet's loving-other be denied coverage just because she is a woman. People who are in love and wish to spend their lives together and form a family unit must not be denied that opportunity just because they are of the same sex, anymore than they should be denied the right because they are of different races, which incidentally, was once the case.

The historical fact of banning interracial marriages is a strong argument against states' rights. The nation as a whole is less likely to be bigoted than an individual state. The aging electorate of Florida may decide to deny equal rights to young families. Kentucky may



Dr. Henry Salzarulo

Feedback is encouraged.

email:

hsalzarulo@aol.com

want to continue tobacco subsidies. There may still be a sentiment in Mississippi or South Carolina to ban mixing of the races, and through deeply religious portions of the country, same sex marriage is a thorn that cries for a Constitutional amendment.

I can't understand why who marries whom is any of my business, or any of yours. Candidates talk about the sanctity of marriage, apparently oblivious to the fact that our national divorce hovers

around 50% and infidelity even higher. Maybe, to preserve the cherished sanctity, we need a constitutional amendment banning divorce. Those who worry about gay and lesbian couples having the right to have children point to the Ozzie and Harriet family of the '50s, one which was largely an illusion even then. Children, they argue, should be raised in a stable home with a loving mother and hard working father. Have they looked around? Are they unaware of the reality of 21st century America? – single moms raising kids, single dads raising kids, grandparents raising kids, moms and abusive boyfriends, moms and pedophile fathers and foster homes of varying quality, all raising kids? The assumption is that homosexual couples will influence their children to embrace their sexual orientation, or that homosexuality is synonymous with pedophilia. A child is lucky if he has two loving parents in a loving, stable, committed marriage, whatever their sex, or sexual orientation.

Not all gay marriages will work out. Many gay couples will experience the rejection, betrayal, hurt, uncertainty, and financial friction that heterosexual couples have always endured. That their kids will sometimes be used as pawns in their battles to hurt each other is nothing new. Their families will prove to be very much like ours, an equal mix of rich Christmas traditions and broken marriages, of proud couples cheering their kids at ball games and angry litigants dividing the marital assets, of a spouse mourning the loss of a life-partner and a quick end to an ill advised union. None of it is any of my business, or yours, or the nation's.

... LETTERS continued from page 4

in power, is at the outset irrelevant; furthermore with all the previous legislations reticence they never pulled off something this egregious.

Republican Representative Tim Moore, said "Whenever the will of the majority is to pass legislation without further delay, we should move forward" at 1:05 AM. This was the same tactic used to pass the job-killing budget; and leaves North Carolinians sleeping with one eye open when the lights are on at the General Assembly.

Speaker Tillis, the John Locke Foundation, Civitas, and all the other people/organizations with allegiances to Art Pope have come out against the coverage of the midnight session. Seems they like con-

demning journalists for accurately describing the Republican's actions. Speaker Tillis seems especially upset over it; so much so he wrote a letter to his supporters and cancelled a newspaper subscription.

The sensible people in North Carolina didn't vote for this vindictive and unprecedented way of legislating. The budget deficit in North Carolina is an extremely pressing issue, but additional to that, is the growing leadership, morality, and priority deficit seen in our General Assembly. Our state and its people deserve better. As Elvis Presley sang it best, "funny how things have a way of looking so much brighter in the day light."

Justin Conley
Franklin Native

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• BACK DAYS IN HIGHLANDS – THE FINAL CHAPTER •

Many have called or asked for more “Back Days” articles by Herman Wilson, shared with permission of his son Neville Wilson.

The last four installments ran in the Dec. 21 and Dec. 28 issues of Highlands' Newspaper and can be read on line at www.HighlandsNewspaperPDF.com. We doubled up in each issue because each installment was short.

In fact, the entire 12-part series can be read on line beginning with the Oct. 12 edition.

As a finale, and with his son's permission, we publish the following eulogy written by Pam Wexler Smith at Herm's death in 1993.

We are also including a short piece written by Herm about mountain vernacular.

A heart-felt eulogy

By Pam Wexler Smith

A chapter has ended never to be read again except in the memories of those whose lives he touched.

Herman T. Wilson, known as Grandad to a select few and as Uncle Herm to the rest of us, has passed from our midst.

I know this remarkable man as the finest story teller in Highlands. “Tell me a story, Uncle Herm,” I would say, and the next few hours would be filled with fascination and hilarity.

“I went as far as I could in school, the 7th grade. I liked to learn. I walked to Horse Cove to a little wooden school house that still has my initials – H. W. – carved on the back wall...” and so it went.

At 17, Uncle Herm and his best friend Vance Owens walked for two days to what is now known as the Blue Ridge Parkway where they landed their first job working for a logging company. He was proud to tell that Joe Luke, a close and special friend, had recently taken him back there and taken his picture on the very site where he worked.

Uncle Herm minimized his exploits and hardships as if they were common place.

At the age of 25, he gave his life to Jesus. “Up to that point I was pretty rough,” he stated candidly.

That decision made a turning point in his life that would influence his perception of life for the next six decades.

Truly no one could duplicate those vignettes with the same candor or authenticity. Like an accomplished novelist, he took his readers on vicarious journeys through these mountains, down to Walhalla by wagon to trade cabbage and blueberries for sugar and coffee, or in later years on some adventurous Jeep rides with Stell Huie, or perhaps going to the flea market every Wednesday with his



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

life-long friend Rad Talley or just being with Joe Luke.

My favorite story – my being a horse lover – was about an old mule “Jack.” Jack was stout – about 900 pounds – and thought the world of me, lamented Uncle Herm.

“Yes, he was a fine animal; carried me everyday from Highlands to Cashiers to deliver the mail. At night when I put him up, I fed him corn on

the ear, eight of ‘em, and he neighed when he saw me comin’.”

“Pam,” he asked, “Do you know the difference between a nicker and a bray?” I didn’t so Uncle Herm proceeded to tell me how to interpret animal language, so you can understand what they’re trying to tell you.

I have been privileged to learn from Uncle Herm about the seasons of life, sorrow and joy, growing up, growing old and surviving tenaciously. Uncle Herm received much from God’s bounteous hand and he shared it with others.

More than a foxfire sampler, I have come to know this man in his delightful narrations – his noble character, Biblical values, strengths and weaknesses, all weaved into delicate threads through every pioneer account.

Note:

Neville Wilson wishes to thank our readers for sharing their interest and comments about in his father with him and Kathleen.

One last word from Herm ... “The words we use in the mountains”

We oldtimers didn’t get much education, maybe up through the seventh-grade. Most of us never use the “ing.” We say walkin, talkin, runnin,

• See BACK DAYS page 8



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• COACH'S CORNER •

NFL Predictions...take 2

Well, since I went 3 of 4 last week (and boy, was I glad to be wrong on the 4th) I have decided to give prognostication another go this week and try and pick the divisional round games in the NFL Play-offs this weekend.

Houston at Baltimore

The Texans dominated the young Cincinnati Bengals last weekend and will look to go into Baltimore and spring the upset. To me, this is the toughest of the four games to pick, because you never know which Joe Flacco is going to show up for Baltimore. I think the Texans will do a good job keeping Ray Rice under control, but they will need a few Flacco mistakes to have the field position to score consistently. I'm going with the Texans here in an upset — 21 to 17.

New York at Green Bay

Ironically enough, the year that the Giants won the Super Bowl, they lost 38 to 35 in the regular season to the New England Patriots before beating them in the Super Bowl. This year, the Giants lost to the Packers 38 to 35 in the regular season and will now travel to Lambeau fresh off of a major beatdown of the Atlanta Falcons. (Can we PLEASE stop calling him Matty Ice now?) I think that the Giants will keep this one close, yet again, but I am going to have to ride with Mr. Discount Double Check and pick the Packers. Packers 34, Giants 28

New Orleans at San Francisco

The Saints come into Candlestick having blown out the Lions in the second half at the Superdome. While the Saints offense seems to be running on all cylinders right now, the Niners boast one of the best defenses in the league and have the speed and talent at linebacker to make life rough on the road for the Saints. The



Ryan Potts
tryanpotts@hotmail.com

key in this game will be if the New Orleans run defense can control Frank Gore and get the Niners off the field. Brees and company are particularly unstoppable if they can find a rhythm, so it will be crucial for SF to grind the ball on offense and keep Brees on the sideline. I think that SF grinds it early, but by the third quarter the Saints will find a rhythm. Saints 28, 49ers 24.

Denver at New England

While I was not totally shocked at the Denver upset, I was shocked by how the Broncos did it. 300 yards passing against the Steelers is no small feat, and the Broncos were much more aggressive than usual despite having John Fox (who hates offense) on the sideline. Denver has a much taller order this week, facing a Patriot offense that has set all kinds of records this year. The key in this game will be the turnover battle. Denver had a 17-6 lead on the Patriots a few weeks ago before turning the ball over on three consecutive trips. I don't believe that Denver can simply protect the ball and win this week, they will need to force some turnovers as well in order to have a chance. Patriots 38, Broncos 28

Alley Rerouting

The members and church family of Highlands United Methodist Church wish to thank you all for allowing us to be a part of this community. We feel blessed to be a Main Street Church, and, yes, we enjoy being the church where the town Christmas tree is located.

We would like to apologize for any inconvenience we are causing any of you by rerouting the alley (Church Street) located behind the church. We want to remain a Main Street Church for the next 100 years. Our goal is to expand our current facility. It will make walking between Spring Street and Main Street safer.

We as the church do appreciate your patience as we reroute Church Street. If you have questions please feel free to call us at 526-3376. Thank you.

Paul Christy, Pastor



dinner to go

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• CONSERVATIVE POV

Happy New Year?

While you were attending a New Year's Eve service, or whooping it up at a funeral party for 2011, or spending a peaceful evening at home, your president was in Hawaii, ostensibly vacationing with his family. Actually, he was busy at work making perhaps the greatest power grab of all US history.

During the run-up to the 2008 election, Obama made the following statement: "We cannot continue to rely on our military in order to achieve the national security objectives we've set. We've got to have a civilian security force that's just as powerful, just as strong, just as well funded." WHAT? I scratched my head, wondering how that was going to happen.

As time went on, Acorn was more or less disassembled and lost most, if not all, federal funding (I think). It looked for a while like SEIU would be the nucleus of the civilian force he was envisioning, and still might play a part. Then the Occupy movement appeared like the plague, became a major pain,

but, even though well funded by someone with an agenda, its message was not particularly clear. Winter came, and they went for now. They'll probably be back in the spring, but it is doubtful they will be a force to be reckoned with.

Was Obama's national security force just a pipe dream? One thing we should have learned by now is that he will do anything possible to achieve his aims. So, with a huge deficit already, and a debt that is on the verge of putting us under,

how is this world-changing dream going to come to fruition? On December 31, 2011, he let us know.

Riddle. What is just as powerful, just as strong, just as well funded as our military? Answer. Nothing. So, why not simply trash the Constitution and make it the enforcement arm of the Executive Branch. Enter the National Defense Act



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

for 2012.

Normally, if you want to keep something out of the news, you sign it late Friday, hoping nobody will notice over the weekend. Obama wanted to cover this signing so badly he did it on New Year's Eve in Hawaii, where press coverage was restricted almost entirely in order to "give the first family privacy."

From Wikipedia: "The Act authorizes \$662 billion in funding, among other things 'for the defense of the United States and its interests abroad.'" It includes the necessary functions of maintaining the military, imposes new economic sanctions against Iran, commissions reviews of the military capabilities of countries such as Iran, China and Russia, and refocuses the strategic goals of NATO towards energy security.

"The most controversial provisions to receive wide attention are contained in Title X, Subtitle D, entitled 'Counter-Terrorism.' In particular, sub-sections 1021 and 1022, which deal with detention of persons the government suspects of involvement in terrorism, have generated controversy as to their legal meaning and their potential implications for abuse of Presidential authority.

Although the White House and Senate sponsors maintain that the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) already grants presidential authority for indefinite detention, the Act states that Congress 'affirms' this authority and makes specific provisions as to the exercise of that authority. The detention provisions of the Act have received critical attention by, among others, the ACLU and some media sources which are concerned about the scope of the President's authority, including contentions that those who they claim may be held indefinitely could include U. S. citizens arrested on American soil, including arrests by members of the Armed Forces."

Obama says in his signing statement: "I have serious reservations with certain provisions that regulate the detention, interrogation and prosecution of suspected terrorists."

Well, if you have serious reservations, don't sign it, veto it, send it back to the Senate. But no. "Moreover, I want to clarify that my Administration will not authorize the indefinite military detention without trial of American citizens." Having graduated from Harvard Law, he knows full well that his signing statement is purely cosmetic. It has no force of law.

From GlobalResearch.ca: "Section 1021 is crystal clear. The Executive cannot refuse to implement it. The signing statement does not invalidate or modify the actual signing by President Obama of NDAA into law. It does not have any bearing on the implementation or enforcement of the law. The Act repeals the US Constitution. While the facade of Democracy prevails, supported by media propaganda, the American republic is fractured. The tendency is towards the establishment of a totalitarian State, a military government dressed in civilian clothes."

If this column stops abruptly, and you see me no more, I guess Obama was fibbing.

... BACK DAYS Final Chapter continued from page 6

speakin, makin, minin, passin, sleepin, freezin – we seldom used "ing."

For the word "see," I still hear people say "I seed." Sometimes we use the word "fur" in place of "for." Sometimes we hear people say "Ah Shucks" when a little surprised. I had an old uncle who used the word "sezze" that must have gone away back in time.

I guessed that most of our way of saying things was brought over from Scotland and Ireland as most of us mountain people are Scotch-Irish. My grandfather always told me that he was full-blooded Irish. He sure had the Irish way – whiskey, pretty women and fist-fighting, but he would never use a deadly weapon.

I fully believe that the English words we now use could be shortened which means we could do away with the long complicated words of today.

— Herman Wilson

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How important is technology in selling real estate?

This is a new day in the real estate industry and technology is essential in marketing property. When I moved to Highlands is 1985, we depended almost solely on walk-in clients. This has changed dramatically over the past few years. It doesn't hurt to have a good, visual office location, but today it's all about the Internet.



**Lynn Kimball
Meadows
Mountain Realty**

The majority of buyers search the web before they come into town. They make their appointments with agents before their arrival. Sellers look to the Internet to see what the real estate firms have to offer before contacting an agent.

My advice to both buyers and sellers is to do your homework first on the Internet. If you are not Internet savvy, pick up or have a copy of the Real Estate Buyer's Guide sent to you. In scrolling through the pages you will be able to get an idea of which Realtor has the most to offer you. Then you can start making calls to them. The response time and the value of what the Realtor has to offer will become pretty clear. Then you can start narrowing down the process of who you want to represent you.

Finding the right Realtor is the key to your success. After taking the time to find someone you can trust...who is an experienced professional, knows the Highlands market and is up on today's

technology, you can settle back and allow them to do what they do best...provide the service and expertise you need in buying or selling a property.

Lynn Kimball has been committed to selling real estate in the Highlands-Cashiers area for over 26 years and is the Broker-in-charge of Meadows Mountain Realty's office across from Highlands Falls Country Club. To search properties, you may visit her website at

www.signatureproperties-nc.com or call 828-526-4101. You will see why this user friendly website attracts a wide variety of buyers. The company website of www.meadowsmtnrealty.com is the number one organic listing for Google keywords, "highlands nc real estate" and "highlands nc homes for sale." Take a look at the sites online and see why Meadows Mountain Realty and Lynn Kimball is your best choice for real estate in the Highlands area.

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PULL OUT

Highlands Area Upcoming Events

Daily

• CORE classes at Mountain Fitness on Carolina Way. Tues., Thurs., Sat., 9:30; Mon., Wed., Thurs., 5:15. \$10 per class or ask about specials. Call 526-9083. (st. 6/9)

Mon., Wed., Fri.

• Heart Healthy Exercise Class at the Rec Park. 8:30-9:30 a.m. \$20/month.
• Step Aerobics with Tina Rogers at the Rec Park,

8-9 a.m. \$10 per class or \$40 a month.

• Zumba at the Rec Park, 9:05a-10a. \$5 per calss. First class free. Call Mary Barbour for Franklin schedule: 828-342-2498.

Mondays

• Closed AA meeting, 5:30 p.m. at the Episcopal Church at Fifth and Main streets.

• Monday Madness at Fressers Eatery in Historic Helen's Barn. \$5 burgers, \$1 off beers all day.

Tuesdays

January 7 – Castle

January 14 - A Century of Quilts

January 21 – Craft in America, Part 1

January 28 – Craft in America, Part 2
Admission is free.

If hands-on participation is your thing, The Bascom is offering classes and workshops in ceramics, painting, drawing, mixed media, journaling and photography. Classes include:

• Painting Basics and Beyond with Robin Swaby on Wednesday, January 4-25 from 10 am-12 noon.

• Ceramic Sculpture with Colette Clark on Mondays and Wednesdays, January 9-18 from 12 noon-2 pm.

• Drawing Basics and Beyond with Knight Martorell on Mondays, January 9-30 from 10 am-12 noon or 5:15-7:15 pm.

• Ceramics: Beginning and Beyond with Frank Vickery on Tuesdays and Thursdays, January 10-19 from 1-3 pm or 5:15-7:15 pm.

• Hearts and Flower Boxes, a ceramic workshop with Colette Clark on Saturday, January 21 from 1-4 pm.

• Photographing a Loved One with Greg Newington on Saturday, January 21 from 10 am-4 pm.

• All Things Wine, a ceramic workshop with Janis Fisher on Sunday, January 22 from 1-4 pm.

• Journaling Mornings with Betty Holt on Saturday, February 4 from 10 am-12 noon.

The Bascom is now open year-round - Monday through Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm and Sunday, 12 noon to 5 pm. Enjoy workshops, exhibitions, special events and quality programs throughout the year at The Bascom. For more information, to register for Bascom workshop offerings or for more details on all Bascom activities, visit www.TheBascom.org or call 828.526.4949.

This Winter, join us at The Bascom!

Enjoy The Bascom year round! This winter enjoy, exhibitions, Saturday Art Cinema and Winter Barn Dances.

The Winter Barn Dances celebrate the service of others to the community. Gather with friends and neighbors, enjoy great music and relive the memory of a great Highlands' tradition.

Honoring veterans on Saturday, January 28th; educators on Saturday, February 25th; and police, firefighters and EMS on Saturday, March 31st, the fun begins at 7 pm. Tickets are \$5 per person and can be purchased at the door. Admission for honorees is complimentary. Food and libations will be available for purchase. The Bascom's Winter Barn Dances are sponsored by The Bascom, The Highlands Area Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center, Mountain Fresh Grocery and the Ugly Dog Pub.

Two exhibitions will be featured at The Bascom this January and February.

• Bascom Instructors - A sampling of talent from dedicated artists who share their gift through teaching. At the heart of The Bascom's education programs are the instructors who work with us throughout the year. These instructors hold the distinction of being experienced professional artists and skilled educators.

• Regional Art opens January 21st with a reception from 5-7 pm. We live amongst nationally and internationally acclaimed artists and we are proud to be their neighbor. In honor of these artists and the non-profit organizations that support them, we are proud to offer our visitors a glimpse of the talent that lies in our own backyard!

Discover Art Cinema, Saturdays at 2 pm in the Loft Gallery. Sit back and enjoy our feature presentations.

• 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.

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.

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

Thursdays & Sundays

• At Paoletti's, 15% off your entire Dinner Check. Call 526-4906 for reservations.

Fridays & Saturdays

• At Paoletti's, 25% off all Bottled Wine and Cocktails.

Every Saturday

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

Every Third Saturday

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

Wednesday, Jan. 11

• Highlands Zoning Board meeting, 5:30 p.m. in the Community Building.

Thursday, January 12

• League of Women Voters presentation about the new watershed being established from Franklin to Fontana at noon in Tartan Hall in the First Presbyterian Church in Franklin. The study, conducted as part of the NC Ecosystem Enhancement Program (NCEEP), presents a Local Watershed Plan for the Franklin to Fontana watershed area. For lunch reservations, call 371-0527. Program starts at 12:10 p.m.

Saturday, Jan 14

• The Nantahala HLong Branch and Appalachian trails to Rock Gap. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin,

across from Burger King, at 9:30 am. Drive 30 miles round trip. Bring water and lunch. Call leader Gail Lehman, 524-5298, for reservations. Visitors welcome but no pets please.

• Art Cinema at The Bascom at 2 p.m. A Century of Quilts

Sunday, Jan 15

• The Nantahala Halong the Greenway from the Macon Co. Library via loop trails and roads. Meet at the library off Siler Rd in Franklin at 2 PM. Call leader Jean Hunnicut, 524-5234, for reservations. Visitors welcome, but no pets please.

• Learn to square dance in just 15 lessons! High Mountain Squares will begin classes for new dancers on Sunday, from 3-5 P.M. Classes will be taught by professional callers Jim Roper and Jim Duncan at the environmental center in Franklin. Dance your way to better physical and mental health. Need more information or a ride? Call Betty @ 787-2324 or visit www.highmountainsquares.org.

Tues., Jan. 17

• Highlands Town Board meeting, 7 p.m. at the Community Building.

• Macon County Democratic Women will meet at the Sunset Restaurant in Franklin at 1PM. Plans will be made for the coming year.

• Highlands Dialogue 10-11:30 a.m. at The Hudson Library. The Plague by Albert Camus (book). Coordinator: E. J. Tarbox. Questions? E-mail John Gaston johnhgaston@aol.com or Karen Hawk hwkncrw@earthlink.net.

Wednesday, Jan. 18

• Adult Classic Movie at Hudson Library at 3:30 p.m. The Searchers.

Thurs., Jan 19

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a six mile moderate hike with elevation change of 500 feet on the Round Mountain-Jack's Creek loop trail with a short car shuttle. Meet at the new Rec Center parking lot in Cashiers between the Post Office and Library at 10 am. Drive 12 miles round trip. Bring a water and lunch. Call leader: Carl Blozan, 743-1765, for reservations. Visitors are welcome but no pets please.

Saturday, Jan 21

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a 4-5 mile moderate hike from Jones Gap to the over-look on Jones Knob. Then back on the Bartram Trail to Keith Day Knob, named for one of NHC's members, and possibly on to Hickory Knob, returning to Jones Gap. Meet at Bi-Lo parking lot in Franklin at 10 am. Drive 30 miles round trip. Bring water and lunch. Call leader Nancy Falkenstein, 369-9052, for reservations. Visitors welcome but no pets please.

Saturday, Jan. 21

• Art Cinema at The Bascom at 2 p.m. Crafts in America Part 1.

Sunday, Jan 22

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a strenuous 8.5 mile hike on the London Bald Trail from Junaluska

Gap to Diamond Valley. Meet at the NHC Club House at 8:30 a.m. Drive 50 miles round trip. Bring water and lunch. Call leader: Call Chris Shaw at 371-0183 for reservations.

Monday, Jan. 23

• Highlands Planning Board meeting, 5:30 p.m. in the Community Building.

Tuesday, Jan 24

• Highlands Dialogue 10-11:30 a.m. at The Hudson Library. "Shoaling in Nietzsche Waters" (material provided at the meeting). Coordinator: Bill Christopher. Questions? E-mail John Gaston johngaston@aol.com or Karen Hawk hwkncrw@earthlink.net.

Saturday, Jan. 28

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a four-mile moderate hike to Lower Whitewater Falls from the Bad Creek Reservoir Parking area. Meet at the new parking lot near the new Rec Center just past the Cashiers Post Office at 10 am. Drive 22 miles round trip. Bring water and lunch. Call leaders Mike and Susan Kettles, 743-1079, for reservations. Visitors welcome but no pets

... FENCES from pg 1

ordinances to the next meeting which is scheduled for Monday, Feb. 6 at 5:30 in the Community Building.

The Outdoor Lighting draft ordinance only deals with commercial lighting and makes "suggestions" for residential lighting – mainly security lights.

In keeping with the Dark Skies Initiative, the idea behind an Outdoor Lighting ordinance is that careless use of outdoor lighting damages the aesthetics of Highlands' nighttime environment.

Like the Planning Board, the Appearance Commission thought the 25-ft. height restriction on pole lighting and shielding all other lighting so light doesn't bleed upwards to contaminate the night sky was the way to go.

Members were concerned that existing commercial, municipal and residential lighting would be grandfathered so continue to be obtrusive, but Clabo suggested requiring commercial and municipal lighting be changed when bulbs burn out or fixtures need replacing. He said the town could request but not require residents to do the same, so that eventually all lights will be fully shielded to cast light downward and not toward the sky.

The commission was particularly upset about the construction of the Wells Fargo ATM in Highlands Plaza since its recommendation was to require it to be built somewhere else.

Since the placement of the ATM was not the commission's responsibility, rather the look, colors and materials, its recommendation went unheeded and the required Special Use Permit was granted by the Zoning Board.

— **Kim Lewicki**

please.

• Art Cinema at The Bascom at 2 p.m. Crafts in America Part 2.

• Winter Barn Dance at The Bascom. Honoring Veterans. 7-10 p.m. Tickets \$5 at the door. Cash only please. Free to Veterans.

Sunday, Jan. 29

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 1.2 mile hike on Lakeside Drive Walking Trail just north of Franklin, near the Environmental and Macon Co. Health centers. Meet at the Health Center on Lakeside Drive off E. Main at 2 p.m. Call leader Kay Coriell, 369-6820, for reservations.

Tuesday, Jan. 31

• Sustainable Tourism presentation in Coleman Hall at the First Presbyterian Church at 2 p.m.

• Highlands Dialogue 10-11:30 a.m. at The Hudson Library. "Body Theology" (handout). Coordinator: Martha Porter. Questions? E-mail John Gaston johngaston@aol.com or Karen Hawk hwkncrw@earthlink.net.

... GOVERNMENT continued from page 1

contained in those laws.

"Municipalities tend to have good track records concerning Local Acts if there is delegation support," said Stenberg.

Armed with that information, last Tuesday Commissioner Amy Patterson requested the board to instruct Town Attorney Bill Coward to begin the Local Act process.

She was stopped in her tracks first by Commissioner Gary Drake and then by Mayor David Wilkes.

Drake suggested first that a final vote was needed to keep the hybrid Council-Manager form of government where the Police Chief and the Zoning Administrator are hired and fired by the Town Board versus the standard statute form where the Manager has complete control. Second, he wanted the new commissioners to weigh in.

However the required final vote was taken in March of 2010.

To recap:

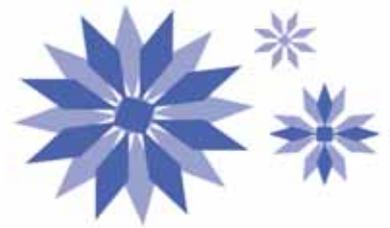
At the March 2, 2010 Town Board meeting, Commissioners Gary Drake, Larry Rogers and Dennis DeWolf voted 3-2 to amend the town's ordinance and to do away with the hybrid form of government where the Police Chief and Zoning Administrator are hired and fired by the Town Board.

Because it wasn't unanimous nor was the vote 4-1, the issue required another vote as well as a public hearing.

According to Town Attorney Bill Coward, to amend an ordinance right off a 4-1 vote is needed. However, since it was a 3-2



Winter 2012



Art Cinema at The Bascom

Saturdays at 2 pm

January 7 - Castle

January 14 - A Century of Quilts

January 21 - Crafts in America, Part 1

January 28 - Crafts in America, Part 2

Winter Barn Dance at The Bascom

Saturday, January 28 - honoring veterans

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vote, another vote was needed, but the outcome didn't have to be the same.

And that's what happened concerning the vote on the hybrid form of government.

The second vote was called at the March 16 Town Board meeting which followed the required public hearing. This time the vote was also 3-2 but with Commissioners John Dotson, Amy Patterson and Dennis DeWolf voting in favor of keeping the hybrid form of the government – flipping the previous vote. Case closed.

Back to 2011:

However, last Tuesday night Commissioner Drake suggested Commissioner Patterson's request to instruct Coward to pursue a Local Act be considered at the first meeting in February after the two new Town Board members, Brian Stiehler and Eric Pierson, completed their commissioner training. Mayor Wilkes agreed.

Since Drake said he was under the impression the issue wasn't settled and another vote was needed, it appeared he wanted to resurrect the hybrid vs. statute form of government issue and specifically to involve the two new commissioners in the process.

But according to Robert's Rules of Order, which are the rules most municipalities and organizations use to conduct parliamentary proceedings, "the proposal to

reconsider a vote can only be made by one who voted with the prevailing side."

Robert's Rules of Order are not binding by law, but if a municipality generally abides by those rules, it would follow that they would stand by them.

But of course there are cases where the validity of Robert's Rules has been both held to rule and also considered to be invalid.

Case in point: a citation in Nelsen v. Burlington in 1986:

"By their third assignment of error the plaintiffs argue that the City Council's action is invalid because Roberts Rules of Order were not followed at the 18 December 1984 meeting at which the Council voted to reconsider its previous denial of Equicap's petition. The plaintiffs have cited no authority, and we know of none, which requires that City Council meetings, to be valid, must be conducted in accordance with those rules." Nelson v. Burlington, 80 N.C. App. 285, 290 (N.C. Ct. App. 1986).

Patterson's request to instruct Coward to pursue the Local Act avenue has been put on the Feb. 7 Town Board agenda for the 7 p.m. meeting in the Community Building.

— **Kim Lewicki**

Dr. Joseph H. Wilbanks, D.D.S.

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- Betty from Franklin, N.C.



Betty, the Lasik procedure does not cause dry eyes. The majority of people who come seeking Lasik already had Dry Eyes and didn't even know it. Many times we'll perform Lasik and also treat the Dry Eyes. Those patients often say, "*I had no idea my eyes could feel this good!*" Whether you are interested in LASIK or not, if you experience symptoms of burning, redness, stickiness and blurry vision, I encourage you to see an Ophthalmologist. As simple as it is to treat Dry Eyes, there's no reason to live with the condition.

~ Richard Blue, M.D.



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• HEALTH MATTERS •

Anesthesia Options



Dr. Robert Buchanan

If we are to have any type of surgery, whether cosmetic or not, some type of anesthesia is required. In simplest terms this means eliminating the pain of the procedure. In practical terms, this also means reducing or eliminating the anxiety and other sensations surrounding the procedure.

There are several ways to define anesthesia depending on what is used, how it is administered and what the goal is.

Strict local anesthesia is the simplest. It blocks the nerves from sending back information on painful stimuli. This can be accomplished several ways. Topical application of a nerve blocker (local anesthetic) works best inside the mouth, but also reduces the sensation from injections through the skin. I use this for Botox® and filler injections. Some fillers now come with a local anesthetic mixed with the filler or we can mix them. By using topical to prevent feeling the initial needle stick, the anesthetic in the filler eliminates the feel of the injection itself.

The same or similar medication can be injected into the skin or around nerves to numb either a small area or an entire body part (local or regional anesthesia). To remove small skin lesions, I generally numb only the area where the lesion is. This can be expanded to very large areas. This is what we do for liposuction; the skin is injected to allow insertion of an injection canula which injects the numbing solution into the fat. If I am injecting a filler or fat harvested from the above

area into the area around the mouth or under the eyes, I generally block the nerves that go to that area. This is a type of what is called a regional block. By selecting the nerves to be blocked, we can block the entire face for peels and laser or an extremity. Much of the hand surgery I do is done

with just the arm numb. This has the added advantage of providing prolonged pain control postoperatively.

Although it is possible to do almost any surgery under only a block of some kind, this is seldom done for any significant surgery. The reason is that the numbing process can be uncomfortable and most people are too anxious to sit still enough during the procedure and would prefer to not know what is going on.

There are two ways to handle this problem when using nerve block anesthesia. One is sedation, simply using a small dose of a drug to make you less apprehensive. This is usually an oral medication and can be used safely in non-certified facilities such as the office. We do this quite frequently for peels, laser, larger office based surgery and some filler injections.

The second is what is called conscious sedation. This takes you to where you do not care about or, frequently, are not even aware of the surgery. This state of sedation not only reduces your awareness but depresses your normal reflexes and, occasionally your desire to breathe. Because of this, it requires careful monitoring in a certified facility such as the hospital. This is the type of sedation used frequently for colonoscopies and what I use in the hospital with regional blocks. It is usually achieved with IV (intravenous) administration of the sedative medication (the case when rules for use of conscious sedation were written), but can be accomplished with oral meds.

In fact, many non-board certified Plastic Surgeons are using oral conscious sedation to get around the strict rules requiring this type of sedation be done in a certified OR. This is cheaper for the patient but risks his or her life.

The other method of anesthesia,

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in the
New
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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

A New Year's resolution to consider?



Pastor Gary Hewins
Community Bible Church

Well, how are you doing? How are you doing on your New Year's resolution? This issue of the paper became available on the 11th of January. Are you still hanging in there to date? In local coffee shops I have overheard conversations about diet and weight loss, methodical attempts to quit smoking and other resolutions to do this or not to do that. They all seem good, productive and noble. Resolving to do something meaningful can be a powerful thing.

What do you think about the idea of resolving to get to know someone better this year? Maybe there is someone in this community that you know as an acquaintance? Maybe someone you consider a friend yet there remains room for a more meaningful connection? I had breakfast this morning with a man who lives in Tokyo. The Japanese long for committed ongoing relationships that are seasoned over time and reflect an established respect and trust.

Technology is a wonderful tool but I wonder if you can accomplish deeper relationships only via Facebook or through texting someone. May I encourage you to no longer just spend time but invest time with certain key people in your life. Depth has its benefits. Vulnerability is risky but the payoffs are huge. Depth means you share in someone's success, grief, pain, and their burdens (Gal 6:2).

I understand there was a time in this country when people wrote letters with handwritten words. They used something called stationery and used something called a pen. A keyboard was something that you put your car keys on next to the back door. People talked for more than three minutes on a phone that had a cord running out of it. People sat on front porches and conversed rather than hiding from one another on back decks. If we are not careful, "knowing" someone will mean something entirely different than perhaps it did prior to all the technology that is supposed to save us time. By the way, do you have any more time? I don't.

Knowing someone differs greatly from knowing about someone. Sometimes knowing about someone is based on less than accurate information. There is a distinct difference between knowing about God and knowing Him. Check out this short text from the Apostle Paul's first letter to the troubled believers in Corinth. I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2).

Here is an incredible educated man declaring his

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 15

John 3:16

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

Proverbs 3:5

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Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting - 7 p.m.

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Wednesdays: 9 a.m. Healing and Prayer w/Holy Communion

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Coffee Cafe, Cashiers
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Wed.: Men's Bible Study - 8:30 a.m., First Baptist Church
Thurs.: Women's Prayer Group - 10 a.m., Whiteside Presbyterian
Church; Healing Service at noon

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Wed.: 6pm: CBC University Program

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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; Bible Study 10:30 a.m.
Reverend Howard L'Enfant
Thursday: 10 a.m. Holy Eucharist (Chapel)

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Dr. Charles Harris, Pastor • 526-4153
Sun.: Worship 10:45 a.m.; School - 9:30 a.m.; Evening Worship
6:30

Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m.,
Prayer Meeting - 6:15 p.m., Choir - 7:15-8:15 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

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Rev. Carson Gibson
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Worship Service - 11 am
Bible Study - 6 pm

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Sundays: Worship - 11

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Pastor Dan Robinson
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Worship, 6:30 p.m.

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

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Pastor Paul Christy 526-3376
Sun: School 9:45 a.; Worship 10:50 a.; Youth 5 p.
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)

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p.m.

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

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Cashiers, Rev. Sam Forrester, 743-2122
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... FORUM continued from page 2

power to its citizens to raise revenue.

Duke raised its wholesale rates 12% as of Jan. 1, so the town needs to raise its rates 12% to hold steady – that is, if it wants to continue to raise revenue at the rate it has in the past.

No, it's not the town's fault that Duke is raising rates, but the town can determine how much it needs to bankroll in its Electric Fund.

With only 924 residents in the corporate limits of Highlands (as per the 2010 census) and many fewer commercial entities, a scant few are being required to keep the town's coffers full when the truth is, many more thousands of people who consider themselves Highlanders are recipients of the outcome of the town's capital projects – yet they have no vested financial interest in Highlands.

"Highlanders" right over the town line, only pay taxes to Macon County – yet they, their families and friends, enjoy Highlands' amenities, services, sidewalks, and infrastructure – all of which make the shops, restaurants and entertainment centers and lodging establishments enjoyable.

Kevin O'Donnell with NOVA Energy Consultants, claims that rates the town of Highlands will be charging its customers from now on ranks in the lower third compared to other Electric Cities in the state. This means there are other cities that charge more and some that charge less.

He also said some cities only transfer \$30,000 per year from the Electric Fund to the General Fund; while others take 25 cents per dollar raised through the Elec-

tric Fund for their General Fund. This means some cities depend more on their Electric Fund than others.

Highlands consistently takes \$260,000 to \$500,000 per year which is why Highlands is in the black, consistently has a healthy fund balance, and has extra money for infrastructure, buildings, repairs, dog parks, wayfaring signage, etc. Electric Fund money is mostly used to keep the fund balance intact, pay for capital projects, and to offset deficits in its two other enterprise funds – water/sewer and sanitation – but it also uses \$100,000 to help fund Highlands' administration costs.

The items Highlands spends the Electric Fund money on are all good things, and they clearly make Highlands unique and tony enough for people to continue to buy second homes even through a recession.

The trickle down effects benefits everyone and is why Highlands isn't a typical "mountain" town. But maybe it's time someone other than the 924 residents and 270 business solely foot the bill. Surely there are ways to raise revenue other than raising taxes, as again, the 924 citizens would be the ones paying. Annexation is not an option. But perhaps the nearly \$300,000 in room tax money coming Highlands' way this year may be one source of untapped revenue; parking meters or surcharges may be other ways. Surely other towns have faced similar scenarios; surely there are a myriad of ways to raise revenue not yet considered.

Interim Town Manager Bob Zoellner said if the town wants to continue making the money it has been thanks to the Electric Fund, then it needs to raise rates to offset Duke's hike and "stay in the business." If not, maybe the town should ask Duke to take over Highlands' utilities, he said.

A graph drafted by O'Donnell, shows that citizens and businesses in the corporate limits of Highlands do spend more than counterparts serviced by Duke right over the town line, but not "that much more," he claims, while admitting the figures he used were based on a "best guess" scenario.

When Zoellner said one option was to get out of the Electric business, O'Donnell was quick to say Duke wouldn't want the system due to its size (even though Duke services everyone outside of town and even has hubs within the town limits). He quickly stressed the importance of Highlands having its own electric system during times of severe weather because citizens will most likely have power restored faster than customers of Duke Energy. "The importance of

this quick response can't be understated when the power is out and the weather is treacherously cold," he said. And of course that's true.

But what he failed to say is that Highlands' is one of his customers upon whom he depends for his livelihood. He works as the liaison between Duke and Highlands. If Highlands gets out of the Electric business, he loses a client.

In any case, it might be time for the Town Board to take a hard look at what it needs compared to what it wants and to consider the needs of the 924 citizens who elected them.

Meanwhile, since it's obvious corporations and elected officials don't have a soft spot in their hearts for citizens, maybe Mother Nature will smile on Highlands and offer up a mild winter.

• HS SPORTS •

with Ryan Potts

Highlander teams dominate Nantahala

The Highlands Highlanders returned from break to open conference play in 2012 against the Nantahala Hawks.

The Lady Highlanders opened up an early lead, but Nantahala used a full-court press to get back in the game at the end of the first quarter. In the second quarter, the Lady Highlanders were able to extend their lead by using their depth to ultimately wear down the Lady Hawks. Highlands held the Lady Hawks to just 5 points during the second period and were able to build a double digit halftime lead. In the second half, Highlander coach Brett Lamb was able to experiment with several different lineups and the Lady Highlanders coasted to a 60-41 victory. Senior Stephanie Smart led Highlands with 11 points and Emily Gabbard added 10.

The Highlanders came out against Nantahala looking to establish their tempo early, and were able to do that on the back of stingy defense and hot three point shooting. The Highlanders hit 6 threes in the first half all in all and took a commanding 30 point lead into the halftime break. In the second half the Highlanders played well and were able to come away with a 75-19 win. Dax Lloyd scored 17 for Highlands and Cody St. Germain added 12.

The Highlanders will travel to Rosman on Friday before playing a make up game with Franklin down the mountain on Saturday.

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... HEALTHY MATTERS continued from 12

general anesthesia, is what most people are familiar with. This uses some IV agents and an inhaled gas. It causes total loss of consciousness, and sensation. Depending on the gas and how much is used, you may or may not lose your reflexes or the desire to breathe. Continuous monitoring by a certified provider is essential.

Each type of anesthesia has advantages and disadvantages. The trick is to

find the one that will work best for you and the procedure you are to have and be the safest. For small things that create little anxiety, I usually use pure local, or add oral sedation for minor nervousness or apprehension. For procedures on extremities I use either a regional nerve block or general anesthesia for the surgery and a local block for postoperative pain relief. For most other procedures I prefer general anesthesia and, if possible, a block. I be-

... SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING continued from 13

one true desire to know the person Christ -- more than facts surrounding his life. It is sad to think about but many in our community have no first-hand experiential relational knowledge of the very God who created them and died that they may access to Him. There are even some who have attended churches for many years who have accumulated knowledge but lack the relational connection to the risen savior.

How can I say this? I have gotten to know people beyond the surface and they told me. It is a tragedy of the utmost magnitude to live on this earth and think you are enjoying life to its fullness only to realize the love and meaning and purpose you have longed for can only be truly realized in a friendship with

Christ.

How can I say that? I have lived both ways. I now live a life with hundreds of people who would only agree that knowing Christ trumps all things this world has to offer. Nothing compares to knowing Christ, how could it?

Think about it. Maybe your resolve and mine should be that of Paul's. Do one thing well. Resolve to know one thing, Jesus Christ and Him crucified and the other new year's resolutions seem to take care of themselves. Talk to Him today and ask Him for the desire to desire Him in a fresh and life-changing way. One more thing, He wrote you a letter that reveals His heart for you. Check out the gospel of John in the Bible and enjoy a resolve to know Him in a deeper and richer way.

• POLICE & FIRE •

Highlands PD log entries from Dec. 27. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor, or public officials have been used.

Dec. 27

• At 3 p.m., \$550 was reported missing from a residence on Old Walkhalla Road.

Jan. 4

• At 6:15 p.m., officers received a call about a man ice climbing who fell from a cliff in Panther Town. Cashiers crews were notified.

Jan. 5

• At 2:33 a.m., officers on patrol reported an open door at a structure on Pierson Drive.

• At 10:15 a.m., an open garage door was reported at a residence on Oak Street. Officers notified the owner.

Jan. 7

• At 2 p.m., a live blasting cap was found on the Greenway Trail by Mill Creek.

Jan. 8

• At 3:40 p.m., officers received a call about a house being egged on Sequoyah Drive.

• At 11:30 p.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident at NC 106 and Arnold Road.

• During the week, police officers responded to 2 alarms and issued 2 citations.

Highlands F&R Dept. log entries from Jan. 3
Jan. 3

• At 10:37 a.m., the dept. responded to a vehicle accident on Painted Turtle Lane. There was a minor injury.

• At 10:56 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to Scaly on a possible structure fire. The call was canceled en route.

• At 9:05 p.m., the dept. responded to an alarm on Church Street. It was due to a test.

Jan. 4

• At 3:18 p.m. the dept responded to a Carbon Monoxide alarm at a home on Hickory Hill. It was due to a furnace malfunction.

Jan. 5

• At 5:12 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to Clubhouse Drive where a 96-year-old man fell. He was taken to the hospital.

• At 2:32 p.m., the dept responded to a fire alarm at a residence on US 64 east. It was false.

• At 3:05 p.m. the dept. responded to a medical alarm at a residence on Owl Gap Road. It was false.

• At 5:05 p.m., the dept. responded to a possible kitchen fire at a home in Scaly Mountain. It was a problem with the stove.

Jan. 8

• At 11:29 p.m., the dept. responded to a vehicle accident on the Dillard Road where a vehicle was over the embankment.

lieve this is the safest type of anesthesia, and works best for most of what I do, especially here in the mountains.

Patients quickly recover because the gases rapidly exit the body through the lungs. Thus most of the drugs that can cause nausea and other problems are quickly out of the body. IV sedation and narcotics require time for the body to metabolize them, occasionally 24-48 hours. We, therefore, try to use them as little as possible. The depth of general anesthesia is also easily controlled using new monitors. With many cases, including almost all facial procedures, the gas is used so you do not feel the local anesthetic injection and then lightened just to the minimal sedation necessary for safe surgery.

Frequently people today are sacrificing safety for cost, occasionally not even knowing it. Many physicians, some not even surgeons, doing cosmetic procedures are heavily advertising that they do their procedures under local anesthesia which is safer. There are several problems with this.

First, it would be safe if the procedure were done under pure local using safe amounts of the local anesthetic agent.

Most, however, either use too much of the local anesthetic agent or use heavy sedation in a non-certified facility. Both of these are quite unsafe. The reason they are touting this method is that they do not have privileges to do the procedures they do in a hospital or other certified facility and no anesthesiologist will work with them in their office OR's. Use of local anesthesia is, thus, the only option they have available.

As they say, "buyer beware." Before consenting to surgery, always inquire about the anesthesia available and who will provide it. Insist that all types be available and that a certified anesthesiologist provide anything requiring significant sedation.

• Dr. Buchanan has privileges for everything he does at the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, a fully certified facility. Anesthesia there is provided entirely by board certified Anesthesiologists. To find out more about Dr. Buchanan or The Center for Plastic Surgery in Highlands, visit www.PlasticSurgeonToday.com or call 828-526-3783 or toll free at 877-526-3784. To find out more about the hospital visit www.hchospital.org.

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CLASSIFIEDS

... ELECTRIC from pg 1

Mayor David Wilkes.

Highlands' is in the third year of a three-year 17% wholesale rate increase from Duke. To help offset that, utility rates have increased for citizens over the last two years, but not enough for the town to both pay Duke and enjoy the same rate of return it has enjoyed in years past. That's why the board wants to raise rates even higher.

That begged the question: How much does the town need to make?

The rate scenario presented by Nix — basically a 28% increase at one time — was based on the town continuing to make between \$600,000 and \$800,000 per year off the Electric Fund. If the town doesn't need to make that much, then the rate could decrease.

Commissioner Amy Patterson suggested considering less of a return. "Maybe we should cut that in half. Maybe we don't need that much. I don't want to give it up, but I am willing to get less than we used to get."

Based on the \$4.4 million generated a 10% rate of return would be about \$400,000 in the Electric Fund. Mayor Wilkes suggested the town aim for a 10% rate of return rather than the 13.5% return it has been enjoying. "That would soften the blow of the rate increase," he said.

Regardless of the scenario, the board will likely approve a new flat rate for residents and use a three-layered rate plan for commercial customers.

With a flat rate per kWh citizens will be able to see exactly how much their bill goes up or down. "The flat rate will give citizens an incentive to conserve," said Patterson.

Commercial customers' bills will reflect three layers of energy — a new rate for the first 1,000 kWhs, a rate up to 3,000 and a rate beyond 9,000 kWhs. This scenario will reflect the energy rate and the demand rate, with the demand rate ultimately determining the commercial rate.

Next week commissioners will also decide whether to increase rates all at once — within one year — or incrementally as Kevin O'Donnell with Nova Energy Consultants suggested.

Once done, the rate will be relatively steady because Highlands' wholesale rate will be stabilized within a year, as it is in the final year of the three-year 17% wholesale hike.

Since the suggested rate increase is based on a 13.5% rate of return, Nix was asked to work up a rate scenario reflecting a 10% rate of return and bring it to the board next Tuesday.

If the board votes to increase rates all at once, commissioners agreed it wouldn't happen during the dead of winter. — **KL**

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• BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NEWS •

Signature Properties joins Meadows Mountain Realty



Judy Michaud and Lynn Kimball of Meadows Mountain Realty

On December 30th, 2011 Signature Properties united with Meadows Mountain Realty and will operate under the Meadows banner.

The owner of Meadows Mountain Realty, Judy Michaud and the owner of Signature Properties, Lynn Kimball, have a long and successful history together.

They both moved to Highlands in the mid 1980s and worked under Johnny White, Director

of Sales at Highlands Falls Realty. This team sold out Highlands Falls Country Club and in 1996 Lynn purchased the real estate firm from the developer of Highlands Falls. She expanded the company into the general real estate business under the name of Signature Properties.

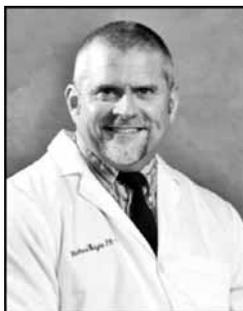
After 21 years as a Broker at Signature Properties, Judy had the opportunity to purchase another local real estate brokerage firm, Meadows Mountain Realty. She

said "Although I loved working with Lynn and Johnny at Signature Properties, I saw this as an opportunity to build a legacy for my family. I am blessed to have a great group of brokers and staff, plus I get to work with my two daughters, Michelle Michaud Muraco and Patricia Michaud Cox, both of whom play a significant role in the success of our company." Lynn fully supported Judy in her endeavor and they have always remained close friends.

The two women agree that their simple explanation for this move is that "although we were unique and successful apart, we believe that we are more powerful together." Both said, "It is truly a blessing for us to be working together again."

Judy plans to combine the best of what both firms have to offer into one dynamic real estate firm. Noted by Michaud, "The real estate industry has changed dramatically over the past 25 years. Today, technology and the Internet are the keys to success in marketing property and attracting buyers to our area." If you check it out online, Meadows' presence speaks for itself and the proof is in the results. In 2011, Meadows Mountain Realty was the number one firm in Highlands.

Meadows Mountain Realty will now have two locations. The original Signature Properties location across from Highlands Falls Country Club has become a Meadows office where Lynn will remain as Broker-in-Charge and will now have more time to do what she does best, list and sell real estate and assist that team of brokers in doing the same. Meadows Mountain Realty continues to maintain the original office in downtown Highlands. In April, they will move their downtown location to Church Street in the Old Edwards Inn complex.



Please Welcome
David Wheeler, MD, FAAFP



Highlands-Cashiers
HOSPITAL

Emergency Services Medical Director
Beginning February 1, 2012

After 24 years of providing dedicated family medicine service to patients at Mountain Area Family Medicine (MAFM) in Cashiers, Dr. Wheeler is transitioning to full time emergency and hospital medicine practice. He will assume the role of Medical Director for Emergency Services at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital (HCH). Dr. John Baumrucker has served the Highlands-Cashiers communities since 1971, and for the past seven years as HCH Medical Director for Emergency Services. Dr. "B" will continue emergency care at the hospital on a limited basis.

"I would like to express my gratitude to each and every MAFM patient for the trust and confidence you have placed in me as a physician. Taking care of you and your families has been an honor. I wish to thank my associates and MAFM staff who are happy to provide well qualified and uninterrupted care for my patients. In addition, Highlands-Cashiers Hospital is actively recruiting a highly qualified physician to assume my practice in Cashiers. It is very difficult to leave the patients I have served over the years, yet I look forward to the challenge of full time emergency medicine. Many years of experience in the emergency room and hospital have provided me with the knowledge to be helpful to more people. I feel confident that the staff, facilities and technology available at HCH will provide the resources for continuing excellence in emergency care." David Wheeler, M.D.

The public is invited to a reception in celebration of Dr. Wheeler's 24 years of family practice Tuesday, January 24, 1:00pm-4:00pm, at Mountain Area Family Medicine, Cashiers Medical Center.



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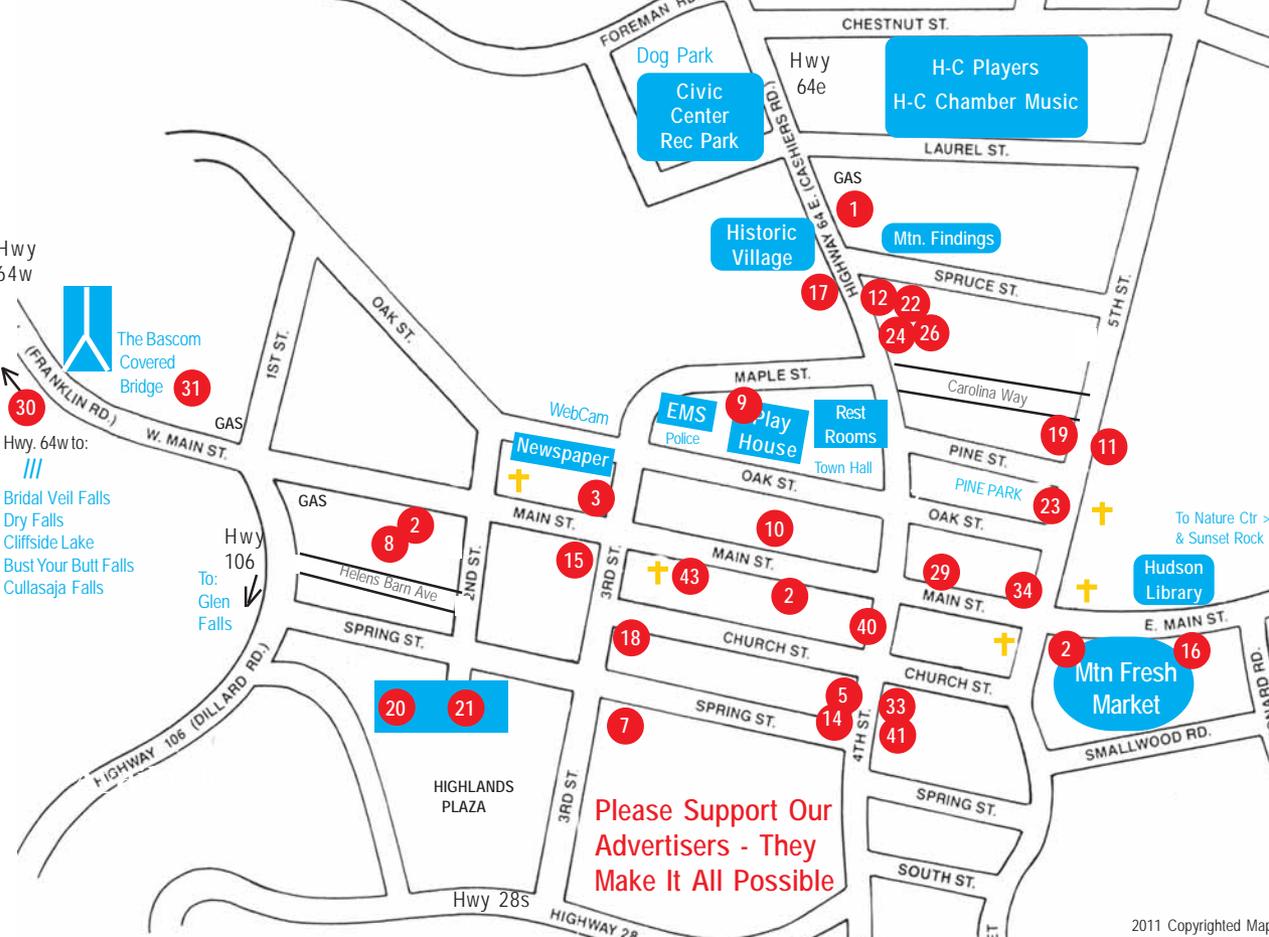
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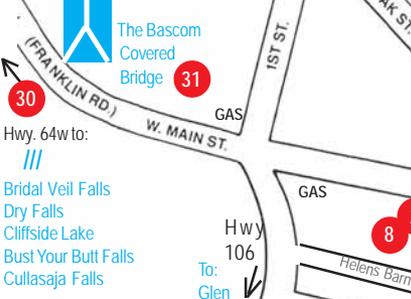
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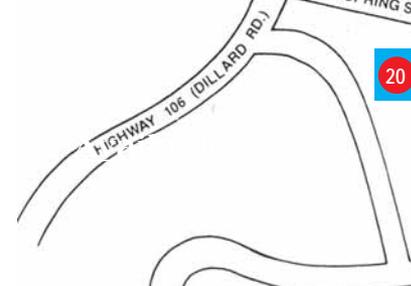
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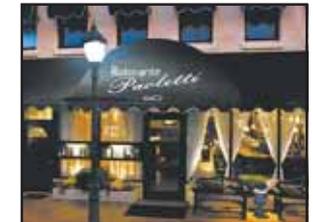
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