

Highlands' Newspaper

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Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2012

Electric rates may go up 12% -25% in January bill

As promised, the Duke Energy/Highlands electric rate forecast was discussed at the first 2012 Town Board meeting Tuesday night, and it wasn't pretty.

Residents and business owners are already reeling under the

incremental rate hike initiated over the last two years and it's about to get worse. At a special called Town Board meeting, Monday, January 9 at 7 p.m., commissioners will decide whether to raise rates incrementally over the

next two years or whether to raise them in one fell swoop this year. The outcome could be somewhere between 12% and 25% – 12% if done incrementally, 25% if done all at once. Since Duke has already raised its rates to Highlands, the

board must make a choice.

"We are already losing money," said Commissioner John Dotson. "We have to make a decision."

"The combination of moving from the old low Nantahala rates

• See ELECTRIC page 11

• Inside •

Letters	2
Obituary	3
Wooldridge	4
Just Hers	6
Swanson	8
Police & Fire	9
Events	10
Spiritually Speaking	13
Classifieds	16

Wayfinding costs OK'd

Tuesday night, the Town Board agreed to spend \$27,450 toward the improvement of Highlands' Wayfinding signage system.

The amount is \$10,700 more than it OK'd on August 2, 2011 but represents an overall savings given the current circumstances.

In August, the board agreed to pay not more than \$16,750 for the services of Lew Holloway, previous Design/Planner with the Small Town Main Street Program (STMS) who lost his job when the state cut his STMS position. But soon after the August meeting, Holloway took a job with Hendersonville, NC.

Luckily, due to work previously done – the Marketing Study by STMS, the Wilbur Smith Parking Study, and a survey of existing and proposed signs completed by the Design Committee – proposals for services similar to Holloway's offer came in drastically less than originally quoted.

Ran Shaffner, of the STMS Design Committee said quotes from the firms queried for branding and wayfinding came in at \$75,000. "Considerably more than you agreed to pay," he told the board, "so we feel we actually

saved you money!"

The Design Committee reviewed three branding and wayfinding organizations and chose Frazier Associates of Staunton, VA, and Arnett Muldrow Associates of Greenville, SC.

It will take through May to finalize branding and designs and it will involve two phases.

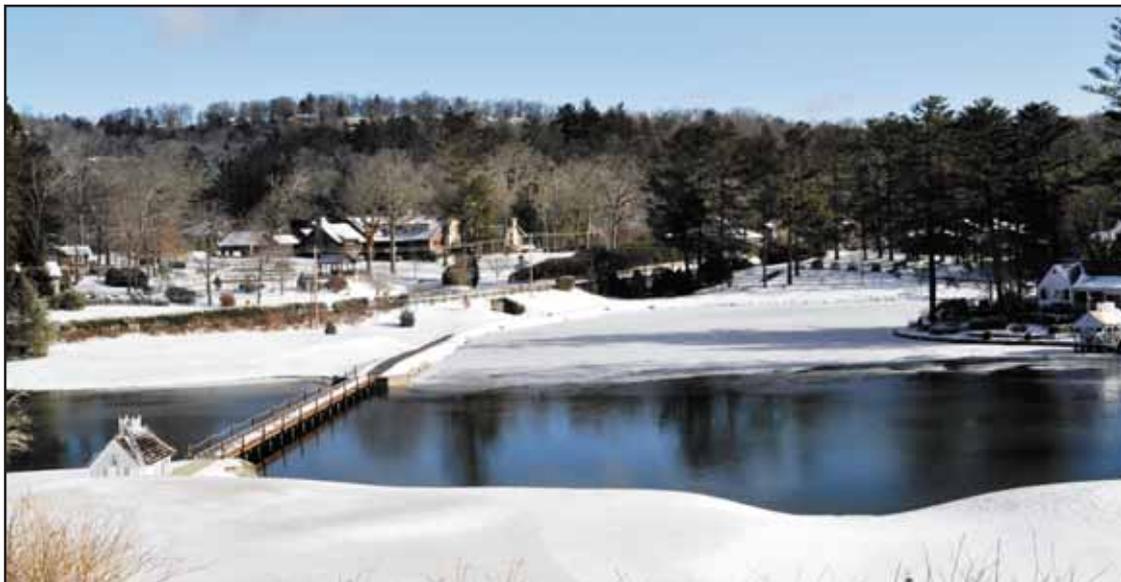
Phase One is about Branding and that will be handled by Arnett Muldrow Associates. The object is a single brand for the signs which can also be used for letterheads, banners, brochures, etc.

Frazier Associates will handle the Wayfinding component, ending with a sign system design using the Highlands brand for gateway entrances, parking and destination signs.

Shaffner said once priorities are set and costs determined, the Design Committee will return to the Town Board for funding to build the signs.

Mayor David Wilkes suggested the committee solicit the Chamber of Commerce and the business community – "the direct beneficiaries of the improved sign system."

— Kim Lewicki



Highlands Country Club the morning after Highlands first 2012 snowfall, Tuesday, Jan. 3.

Photo by Jim Lewicki

Are you ready for winter weather?

So far the winter of 2012 doesn't look or feel anything like the winter of 2011 – which actually started early in December 2010 – but Highlands' winters are usually hardest January through March.

Monday morning Highlanders awoke to temperatures in the 20s which dropped to the low teens by early Tuesday morning.

Over night 1-2 inches of snow fell – a sure sign that winter is officially here.

A message from Macon County Public Health

Heavy snowfall and ice can cause lengthy power outages, life-threatening low temperatures, dangerous road conditions, and can isolate you in your home, sometimes for long periods of

time.

Primary concerns are the potential loss of heat, power, phone, and a shortage of supplies if the storm conditions continue for more than a day.

Melissa Leatherman, Preparedness Coordinator at Macon County Public Health emphasizes that "making a plan and get-

• See WINTER page 17

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• LETTERS •

Have a happy 2012, Fred

Dear Editor,

I've enjoyed Fred Wooldridge's weekly column for years in the Highlands' Newspaper. We anticipate its publication each week and read it during lunch at work and always have a good belly laugh at his observations of 'news' in Highlands and of life in general.

Apparently, something has happened in the past year to sour him on life, though. It's my New Year's hope that he returns to his humor and stop the partisan mean-spirited columns. If I want partisan talking points, I'll watch Fox News, MSNBC or read Don Swanson.

By the way in North Carolina, we don't have hunting restrictions on pests like coyotes, most snakes, etc. As far as I know, the pythons in Florida are not a protected species. So why doesn't Florida take the responsibility for its problem and institute a bounty system paying for the killing of the snakes. Why do we always look to Washington, DC to solve our problems? Federal regulations can slow or stop the intrastate commerce of the snakes (i.e stop digging the hole deeper) but Florida has to deal with the existing snakes (fill the hole in). Just my opinion.

John Rowley
Franklin

Go after the money

Dear Editor,

When asked why he robs banks, the notorious John Dillenger famously said, "Because that is where the money is." So, if the idea of taxation is to raise money to support the government, then you need to tax the people who have the money.

According to the Wall Street Journal, the top 1% own 34.6% of national wealth, while the bottom 90%, own only 25%. So, with this reasoning, if a 100 people had to split \$100, then 90 of

them would have to share \$25.

A recent letter writer complained that the rich already pay too much in taxes, but the facts clearly show that the wealthy pay nowhere near a percentage in taxes that actually reflect their vast wealth. The income gap and the failure of the wealthy to pay their fair share has dramatically increased in recent years. The difference between those who have wealth and the declining middle class, has not been this great since the days of the "Robber Barons" of the 1890s.

Clearly this is "Class Warfare" and the 90% of us, have lost the battle.

Any attempt to raise the tax rate, or even curb the loop holes used by the top earners is always characterized as a confiscatory redistribution of wealth. Even an attempt to return to the modest tax rates under the Clinton administration, is considered thievery by Conservative Republicans.

Again and again we are told the only way to solve our economic problems is to cut, cut, cut. But you could cut every penny of discretionary spending by the Government and still not solve the debt problem. Also, every cut takes money out of the middle class and reduces demand and thus jobs. Income must go up along with a plan to reign-in spending on entitlements. Only then will we see any creditable reduction in our national debt.

The moneyed elite now have the power to stop any increase in their contribution to our society. New rules now allow almost unlimited bribery of Congress. Through their Packs, 501 organizations, and corporate funding of political campaigns, a tiny percentage of the population now has almost total control of the reigns of power. They are being abetted by a willing group of true believers who want to defeat Obama at any cost and are willing to tear down any semblance of a just society, to do it.

Every time the middle class loses wealth, the purchasing power of our economy and jobs take a hit. What the Conservative ideologues don't understand, or don't want to understand, is that when we ALL do better, they, also, will do better.

Louis Vitale
Franklin, NC

We aren't perfect, but we try to love our neighbors

Dear Editor,

This is a response to Fred Wooldridge's rant about Muslims hating Christians because we are hypocrites by using the Lord's name in vain.

Well, we may be guilty of that but:

Christians don't force our women to wear black burkas from head to toe in 100-degree plus climates just because men are dogs who can't control their lust.

Christians don't stone women to death for whatever reason they feel like.

Christians don't force women to marry their rapists, or else languish in prison.

Christians don't make a big show of praying five times a day, but wage war on any religion that isn't theirs....wait a minute, the Shiites and Sunnis ARE still

killing each other, aren't they? Jesus warned us about the hypocrites that stand on the corner praying loudly for all the world to see but then oppress the widow and orphan in secret.

Christian organizations are the biggest source of philanthropy in the world. Christians worship together—men women and children together—not separated like cattle.

Christians recognize that the power of love is greater than the love of power. We're imperfect, but we try to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Most of us believe that all people, regardless of race, color or creed are beloved children of God, and we strive continually to live with that always in our minds and hearts.

In other words, "Actions speak louder than words." Amen

Chaplain Margaret Howell (yes a woman clergy!)

Holy Family Lutheran Church
Highlands, NC

• See LETTERS 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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• OBITUARY •

William Martin Brennan



William Martin Brennan died at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital on December 18, 2011, born in Coral Gables, Florida, on June 24, 1933. He was a member of Our Lady of the Mountains

Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church on Thursday, December 22. Burial was at the Highlands Cemetery.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

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Catholic Church.

He served in the United States Coast Guard. After retiring from Gables Engineering in Coral Gables where he was an associate engineer and moving to Highlands in 1994, he could fix almost anything you put before him.

He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Gail, daughter Kimberly, grandson Billy of Highlands, son Michael Brennan, wife Amy of Saxapahaw, NC, daughter Dawn Joyner, husband Rob, grandson Robby of Cumming, GA.

A funeral mass will be held at Our

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• LAUGHING AT LIFE •

She haunts my memory

*Note: This story is taken from my book **I'm Moving back to Mars**. It is one of my favorites.*

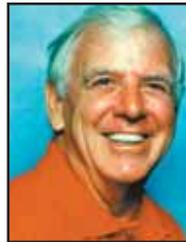
In the winter of 1962 I was very much a rookie cop, still wet behind the ears, as they say. Incredible as it may seem, in those years, the police handled all medical rescue calls and firemen put out fires. Our training was minimal and our equipment primitive. Chances of surviving a major medical trauma were slim to none. It was just how things were back then.

It was an early morning incident, just after roll call. The "woman down, code 3" signal was typical as the season was in full swing and South Florida was full of visitors, many of them elderly. I arrived at the swanky Miami Beach hotel and lifted the heavy first aid and oxygen kit from my trunk. A crowd of spectators had formed around a frail, elderly lady placed on a lobby couch.

She was an attractive woman, in her seventies, wearing a colorful long-sleeved dress and modest jewelry. Her

hair was full gray, with each strand set perfectly in its place. You could tell that, in her younger years, she was a very beautiful woman. I knelt down beside her to administer oxygen as it was apparent by the pale color of her skin she was suffering a heart attack. Her eyes had been closed but when she felt the mask touch her face, she opened them and pushed the mask away. I pulled the mask from her hand and tried again to force oxygen into her lungs but she pushed the mask away. She reached up, softly touched my cheek and smiled, looking directly into my eyes. She spoke so softly I could not hear her so I leaned down and put my ear closer to her mouth. Her European accent was thick and I had to pay close attention to understand her.

"Officer, it is my time. You can't help me. Please hold me." I pulled away from her and she smiled at me again, reaching



Fred Wooldridge

Feedback is encouraged!
askfredanything@aol.com

to touch my face. She mouthed the words again without speaking. "Please hold me." Overwhelmed, I instinctively lifted her upper torso from the couch and held her tightly. She put her arms around me gently and gave up her life.

Rookies occasionally cry but not me. I was always able to hold it back.

A year later, I would be able to handle this kind of incident with complete indifference; A job hazard.

Later, when the Medical Examiner personnel lifted her limp body into a bag, one of her dress sleeves rode up her arm revealing a tattooed seven-digit number on her inner forearm, placed there by the Nazis many years ago. I would later learn from the detective assigned to investigate her death that she had no living relatives. Her husband, children and sister had all been killed in the concentration camps. She had been alone in the world and now

she was at peace. I suppose it had been quite some time since anyone had held this pretty lady in their arms. I feel so privileged to have been the last person to have done that.

This incident occurred almost 50 years ago and I remember it today as vividly as if it were yesterday. It is her smile that haunts me, the feel of her hand on my face, her soft whisper in my ear. Her arms sliding from around my back and falling limp. I no longer think of her as often as I used to. Time has a way of putting all things in the past. But every now and then, she pops into my mind. It is a pleasant haunting. Someone I knew for only a brief few minutes. I pray that my death will be as gentle and peaceful as hers.

Happy New Year to all my readers and may someone touch your life in 2012.

*Read Fred's column on-line all winter. And download a copy of **Deceived** on your Kindle or Nook.*

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• THE VIEW FROM HERE •

Globally we have a long way to go ... let's start now

A seven-year-old girl was murdered, her liver removed and offered to the gods. The sacrifice didn't take place in 14th century Inca Peru, but in rural India in 2011. An Afghan woman was tortured and imprisoned by her in-laws. She was beaten, and finger nails pulled out; punishment for refusing to engage in prostitution to supplement the family income in 2011. The last of our troops had barely crossed the border into Kuwait when Iraqi suicide bombers renewed their campaign of destruction and destabilization. India is the world's most populous democracy and one of the fastest growing economies in the world, but it is very different than us.

We cheered the Arab spring and imagined that a liberal tolerant democratic movement was being born. There are liberal elements in North Africa and the Middle East, and they may have given birth to the revolutions that swept the area, but for now at least, their dreams will not be realized.

In Egypt, Mubarak was forced to resign. The military that replaced him has been reluctant to yield power. Islamists, hard core and soft have dominated parliamentary elections. Christians have been murdered and their churches burned. In Libya, tribal and militia leaders will jockey for position until another strong man emerges to impose dictatorial rule, an equally dictatorial Islamic theocracy is established, or perhaps in time, the dream of democracy, human rights, and tolerance prevail.

Nearly half a century ago, we fought a war in Viet Nam. It was a conflict that cost 58,000 Americans, and between one and two million Vietnamese lives, 350,000 US and countless Vietnamese wounded. The financial cost was \$150,000,000,000. It was a war which strained and threatened to shred the fabric of our nation. We lost the war because our will was not as strong as theirs, and despite a 20/1



Dr. Henry Salzarulo

Feedback is encouraged.

email:

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kill ratio. We fought and were defeated by a determined insurgency. Viet Nam remains under Communist rule today, but has become a major trading partner. Many of us have not yet forgiven Jane Fonda, but we purchase Vietnamese garments without a second thought. Relations have normalized.

Viet Nam was a sobering and devastating experience. It taught us, or should have taught us, the limits of overwhelming military might

when pitted against a dedicated guerilla force. Reflection on the tragedy spawned the Weinberger Doctrine, which was further refined by General Colin Powell. It seems our leaders have forgotten the costly lesson.

Our adventures in Iraq and Afghanistan were unfocused and ill conceived, lacked a well-defined goal and a clear exit strategy. A far greater problem is our determination to build nations "in our own image and likeness." We believe the myth of globalization and it is an easy trap, in a world in which there seems to be a Starbucks on every corner of every major city, where automobiles constructed from bits and pieces from factories around the world are assembled and sold as American, Japanese, or Korean.

The Internet has brought us closer, allowed us to communicate in ways never before possible. A world economy masks vast which differences remain and will for decades or centuries. We live in a world where animal rights activists insist that we refrain from testing drugs on animals. In this same world we test drugs on citizens of the third world, women are executed for the crime of having been a victim of rape, and education is limited to religious indoctrination, and even that meager preparation is reserved for me. We live in a country in which gay rights and same sex marriage dominate the political landscape, in a world in which gays are stoned for the crime of being gay.

It is presumptuous folly to believe we can force democratic institutions in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. It is ar-

rogant to believe that we can dictate our idea of human rights to people whose experience is so different from our own.

When people demand change, as Eastern Europeans under Soviet rule, they can have change, but it should be purchased with their treasure and their blood.

Political thought continues to evolve, in this country and around the world. North Africa and the Middle East

may develop or adopt democratic ideals. India may finally rid itself of the caste system. The day may come when the practice of excising the clitorises of young girls may seem as barbaric in the Muslim world as it does here.

But not today, and not on our schedule. Not in a world in which a little girl's liver can still be offered to the gods.

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• BIZ NEWS •

Maman takes Manhattan, Part III

It's interesting listening to folks returning from New York. So often, their plans include a Broadway show or two. These same people assume that if you are actually lucky enough live in Manhattan, you must be going to shows all the time, and at least have season tick-

ets to events at Carnegie Hall or Lincoln Center. I did know people who regularly went to the theater and concerts, but you have to remember two important facts. First, unless you have friends in the business, shows and concerts can be very expensive. Second, if you are working a

stressful 9 – 5 job in New York, down time is more often spent vegging out in front of the TV, or nibbling on a bagel at the local deli while reading *The Sunday New York Times*.

I wanted to make sure Maman experienced the best that New York had to offer, so I phoned up for tickets to something she'd enjoy. A huge fan of Victor Hugo, I was sure my mother would love *Les Misérables*. But ordering tickets? I was clueless. In desperation, I phoned the number listed in the newspaper ad. "Where do you want to sit?" the ticket lady said, in a very businesslike tone. Sometimes you have to be honest, trusting that folks are going to do the right thing. That's what I did here. I apologized to the ticket lady, explaining that my mother was coming to town, and that I wanted this Christmas to be particularly memorable. There was silence on the other end of the phone. "Don't worry, dear," said the ticket lady. "I'll make sure you get good seats." And she did, too. When we showed up at the theater, flushed and eager as schoolgirls, the usher took our tickets and showed us to a pair of fabulous seats, near the front. Maman was impressed, and thought me quite clever to



Michelle Mead-Armor
michiemead@aol.com

have landed them. I just silently thanked the ticket lady, who must have a mother somewhere that she loves, too.

Whether you are watching a show on Broadway, or your children's Christmas pageant, when the curtain rises, something magical happens. Even amateur theatrics and concerts can have that sense of wonderment and enchantment. While a film or recording may be

technically flawless, there is nothing like a live performance, warts and all, for sheer passion and emotion. So it was with *Les Misérables*. I was afraid the musical might not live up to the original story, but it was very true to the book. We laughed, we cried, we shared a packet of Kleenex. We cheered for Jean Valjean, and cried for Fantine. We were with the crowd, fighting, shouting, and dying on the barricades. Maman was thrilled with the performance, and the two of us walked back home, arm and arm, singing all the tunes we could remember.

On Christmas Eve, we hailed a taxi and headed downtown to the lower East 30s, to attend midnight mass at the Church of the Good Shepherd. It's a charming place of worship with a warm and friendly congregation. If you ever go there, be sure to pay particular attention to the main stained glass window. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is supposed to be holding a lamb in his arms. The lamb in question, however, is definitely not sheep-like, with its large ears pointing suspiciously upward. As a visiting English clergyman quipped in his sermon, "You really should be called the Church of the Good Bunny!"

The service was lovely, all carols and candlelight. While the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, may be the ones that come to mind at Christmas, there's something to be said for the choir of your local church. Seeing them process in, wearing their traditional

• See JUST HERS page 15



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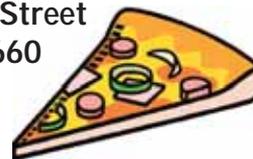
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• COACH'S CORNER •

Quick picks for Wild Card Weekend

Four Wild Card round playoff games will occur in the NFL this weekend, so here are some quick picks and analysis from a certified 2 time Fantasy Football Champion!

Atlanta-New York

The Falcons will travel to New York to face Eli Manning and the Giants. I think that the key matchup in this game is Atlanta's offensive line against the pass rush of the Giants. The first couple series of the game will tell a lot about the outcome, as if the Falcons are able to keep Matt Ryan clean in the pocket then he will do a ton of damage with Julio Jones and Roddy White. Offensively, the Giants should be able to throw the ball against a poor Falcon secondary, but they need Brandon Jacobs to move the chains on the ground and make play action a factor. My pick: New York 31 Atlanta 28

New Orleans-Detroit

The beloved New Orleans Saints host Detroit in a rematch of a prime time football game from a few weeks ago. In that game, Ndamakong Suh did not play and Drew Brees shredded a Detroit secondary that just got maraudered (I don't know if that is even a word) by some guy named Matt Flynn on Sunday. The key to this game is going to be turnovers. New Orleans will have a tough time stopping Matt Stafford and Calvin Johnson, and no one has been able to slow Brees and company this year on offense. Which ever team gains an extra possession or two by forcing a turnover will be on the winning side of this matchup. My



Ryan Potts

ryanpotts@hotmail.com

pick: New Orleans 38 Detroit 34

Cincinnati-Houston

This one is a difficult pick, because Cincinnati has played everyone tough this year and the Texans are banged up. However, I think that the Houston defense has not gotten

enough credit for their performance without Mario

Williams, and I think that they will shut down AJ Green and Andy Dalton on Saturday. My pick: Houston 24 Cincinnati 17

Pittsburgh-Denver

This one looks like a slam dunk for the Steelers-Denver and Tim Tebow have been dreadful on offense the last two weeks and the Denver coaching staff looks to have lost confidence in their young quarterback. The Steelers are, well, the Steelers, and bring a nasty defense into Mile High Stadium looking to shut down Denver's running attack. However, Pittsburgh has lost their top 3 running backs to injury, and will be without Safety Ryan Clark as well. Steeler QB Ben Roethlisberger is playing at about 60 percent mobility, which means that the Steeler offense might not be able to score enough to put Tebow and company away early. I think Denver keeps it close, but Pittsburgh is the superior team. My pick: Denver 17 Pittsburgh 20

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• CONSERVATIVE POV

...and they're off!

By the time you read this, the Iowa caucuses will have been held and the results known. I don't have the luxury of that knowledge so, already, you know more than I do, something that some of you have suspected all along. That won't stop me, however, from writing on the subject.

Iowa is in a unique situation. Not only is it the first state to hold a presidential primary, it doesn't actually hold a primary vote – it holds caucuses. For those of you who are politically challenged, let me explain.

When (if) we vote in a primary, we go to our polling place, go behind the secret curtain, and pull a lever or push a button or fill in a circle, whatever, and out we go, spending a total of maybe five minutes and nobody knows who we chose.

If you choose to participate in an Iowa caucus, it's a different story. You go to one of 1,784 locations in the state; churches, fire stations, living rooms, etc., and state the case for your favorite

in front of friends and neighbors. This can take several hours, depending on the rules set by your caucus. The result is to elect delegates to one of 99 county conventions. These county conventions then select delegates to the State Convention, which eventually choose the delegates for the presidential nominating convention. Yawn. It gets better, I promise.

So, who are the hopefuls (and the hopeless)? Sarah Palin, the favorite of many, pulled out in October, much to the dismay of her loyal following. She certainly acted like a candidate for much of the year, showing up at strategic events and drawing crowds. Doesn't look like it's going to happen for her, however.

Chris Christie, the bombastic, rotund Governor of NJ, was the conservatives' ideal potential candidate. He tells it like it



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

is (a refreshing change from the usual political double-speak we're used to) and doesn't mind getting in the face of those who oppose his conservative views. He said he didn't feel ready. Too bad. I would have loved to watch him debate Obama. No such luck.

Others who were considered but declined include: Haley Barbour, John Bolton, Jeb Bush, Mitch Daniels, Jim DeMint, Mike Huckabee, Bobby Jindal, Bob McDonnell, Mike Pence, David Patraeus, Marco Rubio, Paul Ryan and John Thune, any one of whom would be a dramatic improvement over the world traveler, amateur golfer and sometimes president, Obama.

So, let's survey the field. "A funny thing happened" to Michele Bachmann on the way to the Iowa caucuses.

Born and somewhat raised in Waterloo, Iowa, (her family moved to Minnesota when she was 13), she thought she would be a shoo-in to win in her native state, especially after winning the GOP straw vote in Ames in August.

The self-appointed leader of the Tea Party Caucus, after her national polling numbers hovered in the high teens in June and July, her numbers slowly sank into relative oblivion and, last I saw, had 9% of the Iowa likely caucus-goers.

Rick Perry was next in the crash-and-burn parade.

The successful and popular Texas governor entered the fray in August and was looking good, with national polling appeal hitting the thirties in August and September. Then came the televised debates. Rick acted as if he never spoke in public before and made gaffe after gaffe. His lofty popularity vaporized and he hasn't recovered yet. Too bad, he might have been the right guy.

The conservatives were looking around for someone to hang their hat on when who should appear on the scene but Herman Cain. In spite of their alleged racial bias, the Tea Party people seemed to

find what they were looking for in Herman. A fiscal conservative with a plan and the ability to tell his story convincingly, Cain shot to the top of the polls. But alas, it wasn't to be. Seems that Herman just couldn't contain his overabundance of affection for the ladies. Exit Herman.

Enter Newt. Newt was to become the next flavor de jour. Known as a brainiac who occasionally goes off the rails, he had a highly successful run as Republican House leader in the mid-nineties. Architect of the "Contract with America," he also enjoyed several major legislative accomplishments. Enjoying a huge spurt in the national polls in December, evidently his lack of an organization in Iowa is telling as he sags into the also-ran category.

Ron Paul, quirky libertarian, started with a core of enthusiastic supporters, but the core didn't grow much in spite of his well-organized campaign.

Jon Huntsman, ex-governor of Utah and former ambassador to China under Obama, never got traction.

Rick Santorum, three-term senator from Pennsylvania, lost his seat in a bitter battle in the election of 2006. A staunch social conservative, after working Iowa hard and seemingly getting nowhere, is making a late surge.

And last but not least, Mitt Romney. While the shooting stars rose and then flamed out, "steady Eddie" Mitt hung in, usually in second place and always somewhere in the twenties, doing quite well in the debates and enjoying an organization developed for the last election.

Personally, contrary to many conservatives, I favor Romney for several reasons. I believe he stands the best chance to beat Obama, which is job #1. I believe he has the resume we need in this time of economic turmoil. He has fixed things on a grand scale in the past, has run a very liberal state successfully, and he looks and sounds presidential. Good enough for me.

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• POLICE AND FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands PD log entries from Dec. 18. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor, or public officials have been used.

Dec. 18

• At 10 a.m. a breaking and entering with larceny was reported at a residence on Sequoyah Point Way when the caretaker noticed a deck door open and found sheepskin rug valued at \$400 and a 42-inch flat screen TV valued at \$2,000 missing.

Dec. 27

• A little past midnight officers stopped a driver of a black GMC Yukon with temporary GA tags at US 64 west and Mirror Lake for driving under the influence. An arrest report was not available.

• During the week, police officers responded to 1 alarm.

Highlands F&R Dept. log entries from Dec. 14

Dec. 14

• At 10:11 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to Hickory Hill Road.

• The dept. responded to a burning incident at Rolling Acres when neighbors complained that the person had already been told he couldn't burn there. The incident was referred to Air Quality Control.

• At 6:11 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to Maim Street. The victim was taken to the hospital.

Dec. 15

• At 9:48 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm on Cullasaja Club Drive. Workers were testing the system.

Dec. 16

• At 3:03 p.m., the dept. joined other area fire and EMS depts. for a drill at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital.

• At 6:17 p.m., the dept. was called to a residence on Upper Brushy Face where four people were stuck in the elevator on the third floor. The keyholder unlocked the elevator so the call to the fire dept. was canceled.

Dec. 17

• At 6:26 p.m., the dept. responded to a chimney fire at a residence on Blue Valley Road. There was no damage to the structure.

Dec. 19

• At 9:59 a.m., the dept. responded to a possible structure fire on Hospital Drive. The source was undetermined.

• At 3:40 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to Cashiers on a possible structure fire on Sapphire Ridge Road.

Dec. 20

• At 7:14 a.m., the dept. responded to a possible structure fire at a residence on Doll Lane due to smoke in the house. It was due to a heater.

Dec. 22

• At 10:34 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Clear Creek Road where a 30-year-old female had fallen. She was taken to the hospital.

Dec. 24

• At 2:08 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Flat Mountain Road. It was due to a closed damper.

Dec. 25

• At 2:21 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to Church Street. The victim was taken to the hospital.

Dec. 28

• At 11:50 a.m., the dept. responded to an 18-wheeler accident on US 64 west. There were no injuries.

Dec. 29

• At 9:26 a.m., the dept. stood by for the Cashiers Fire Dept. while at a special drill.

• At 3:14 p.m., the dept. responded to a chimney fire at a residence on US 64 west where the insulation was burning. It was extinguished.

Dec. 30

• At 9:12 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of an electrical fire at a residence on Mountain Ash Lane. The element on the hot water heater had shorted out.

Jan. 1

• At 6:03 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Cullasaja Drive. The victim was taken to the hospital.

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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

• 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.

Every Saturday

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

Every Third Saturday

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

Thursday, Jan. 5

• Taize at the Incarnation Episcopal at 5:30 p.m.

Friday, January 6

• The High Mountain Squares will dance this Friday night, January 6th at the Macon County Community Building from 6:30 to 9 PM. Richard Smith from Gainesville, GA will be the caller. We dance Western Style Square Dancing main/stream and plus levels. There will be a Plus Workshop from 6:30 to 7. Everyone is welcome. For information call 828-349-0905, 828-524-4930, 828-524-2280, or www.highmountainsquares.org

Saturday, Jan 7

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a six mile moderate hike with an elevation change of 800 feet on the Long Branch Trail to the site of the shelter to be constructed on the Appalachian Trail. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin, across from Burger King, at 9:30 am. Drive 30 miles round trip. Bring water and lunch. Call leaders: Sharon and Bill Van Horn, 369-1983, for reservations. Visitors are welcome but no pets please.

• Art Cinema at The Bascom. Castle.

Sunday, Jan. 8

• Auditions for one female part in Highlands-Cashiers Players spring production of "The Dixie Swim Club" 3 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center on Chestnut Street.

Wednesday, Jan. 10

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

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.

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 overlook 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.

Sustainable Tourism subject of lecture Jan. 31

Alex Naar will be coming to Highlands to discuss sustainable tourism. He will make a presentation that will include challenges and success stories from other communities similar to Highlands, lessons learned and more. After his presentation there will be time for questions and answers. This presentation is hosted by the Jackson-Macon Conservation Alliance. J-MCA will record all suggestions from the audience as we work toward developing sustainable solutions that will be presented to the Town of Highlands' Board in Spring of 2012. The Sustainable Solutions Project focus is to contribute to place-based economic development projects that build on local natural resources and retain wealth within the Town of Highlands; and foster community involvement in local environmental protection problem solving and civic engagement.

Naar is the Director of Outreach at the Center for Sustainable Tourism and the Office of Engagement, Innovation, and Economic Development at East Carolina University. The Center is dedicated

to promoting sustainable tourism throughout our region, North Carolina, and the nation through innovation in graduate education, leadership development, community consultation, and collaborative research. Devoted to implementing sustainable practices in business operations, public policies, and personal travel behaviors, the Center offers solutions to challenges facing the tourism industry and destination communities as they balance economic viability with socio-cultural and environmental enhancement and equity.

He graduated with a degree in Environmental Studies from the University of Colorado at Boulder, where he started his foray into sustainable tourism providing technical assistance to restaurants and hotels interested in implementing green practices. A long-time resident of western North Carolina, Alex now lives in Greenville, North Carolina with his wonderful wife and son. The presentation is Tuesday, Jan. 31 at 2 p.m. in Coleman Hall at the First Presbyterian Church.

– Special Audition Call –

Auditions will be held for one female part in HCP's spring 2012 production of "The Dixie Swim Club" at PAC on Sunday, January 8th starting at 3:00pm.

It is an awesome script, funny and poignant, and you will be working with four of the nicest women you have ever known!

Rehearsals begin in March with performances beginning May 10th and concluding May 20th.

A copy of the play, and the portions that will be read at the auditions, can be looked viewed at the Hudson Library and the Cashiers Library.

For more information, call Ricky Siegel at 526-4464 or 200-9237.

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.

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 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.

Wednesday, Feb. 1

• Children/Family Movie at 3:30 p.m. The Fox and the Hound.

Thursday, Feb. 2

• Taize at the Holy Family Lutheran Church at 5:30 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 4

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a nine-mile strenuous hike with a 1,000 ft. elevation change to Purchase Knob in Smoky Mtn. Nat'l. Park, via Cataloochee Divide Trail from Cove Gap. Meet at Dillsboro Huddle House at 8 am, drive 70 mi. round trip. Bring water and lunch. Call leader: Don O'Neal, 828-586-5723, for reservations.

Wednesday, Feb. 8

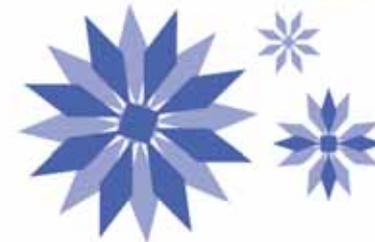
• An American Red Cross First Aid Basics course will be conducted by Macon County Public Health Wednesday, from 9 a.m. until 12 p.m. at Macon County Public Health. Participants must pre-register and pre-pay at Macon County Public Health before February 8, 2012. For information on class fees and to register for this class please call Melissa Leatherman at 349-2459.

Sunday, Feb 5

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy two mile hike over fields and woods of the Tessen-tee Farm, an early 1800's farm in Otto being restored by the Land Trust. Meet at Smoky Mt Visitors' Center, in Otto, at 2 pm. Drive 6 miles round trip. Call leader, Kay Coriell, 369-6820, for reservations. Visitors are welcome, but no pets please.



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

7 - 10 pm *Tickets: \$5, on sale at the door

*Cash only, please. Food and beverages on sale.

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... ELECTRIC continued from page 1

(when Highlands had the second lowest utility rates in the state) to Duke's average rates combined with its construction of new cleaner plants is resulting in substantial rate increases for Highlands," said Nova Energy Consultant, Kevin O'Donnell.

In defense of Highlands' rate hike, O'Donnell pointed out that Duke retail rates change twice a year, representing base rate changes and fuel changes, respectively. So, theoretically, Duke's retail customers get two hikes a year whereas Highlands wholesale rate from Duke goes up once a year so Highlands' customers only get one increase per year.

For instance, he said Duke's retail rates on residential customers went up 5% in September for fuel and the base rate was 7.2% for a total increase of 12.2%. O'Donnell said Duke will file another base rate increase next year and Nova's guess is it will be 10%. The fuel change hike estimate is about 3%.

"So, when we compare our rate changes, we need to consider both Duke's fuel increase and its base rate increase. Due to Duke, Highlands' rate forecast is a moving target and has been adjusted twice

since May and will be adjusted again in November 2012, he said.

In any case, O'Donnell suggests the town continue to gradually increase rates. "Citizens have a hard time swallowing a rate increase all at once," he said.

As per O'Donnell's plan, to offset Duke's wholesale rate hike and maintain its lucrative enterprise fund, Highlands' rates would increase 12% as of Jan. 1, 2012 followed by an 8% increase in 2013 and then from 2013-2019, O'Donnell assumes Highlands wholesale rates will increase at the same rate as the Duke's retail rates – at or below 5% per year – and so would its rate to citizens.

O'Donnell's rate forecast for 2011 to 2019 – which is an assumption not a fact, he said – shows Highlands' residential customers paying more than if buying electricity directly from Duke but paying much less than Haywood EMC customers.

Assuming energy usage is 1,500 kWhs per month, in 2012, Duke customers will pay \$151.78 including the base rate and fuel increase. Highlands' increase will be \$161.37 for the first 200 kWhs and usage up to 1,500 kWhs. Like Duke customers, Haywood EMC customers will see an increase

of the base rate and the fuel charge – \$218.15.

Highlands buys electricity at a wholesale rate from Duke and then sells it to citizens which makes Highlands' Electric Fund the town's major enterprise fund.

Though it can be more during any given year, this means a continued capital outlay of \$260,000 per year from the electric fund – the fund that has historically kept Highlands in the black.

Some of the money raised is used for the electric department, but historically the money is used for non-electric purposes, like \$154,599 recently transferred to capital projects.

In addition, the electric fund annually contributes \$100,000 per year for administrative services provided by town staff.

All told, the electric fund contributes between \$250,000 and \$500,000 a year for the town's general purposes which is a huge amount for a town as small as Highlands, said O'Donnell, but Highlands could always decide to transfer less from the electric fund. O'Donnell said he knows of a town that only takes \$30,000 a year and another that transfers 25% of every dollar made into the General Fund.

"The board has to decide if it wants to

break even or make money, which is why we are in the electric business," said Interim Town Manager Bob Zoellner.

But Mayor David Wilkes said if the town decides to break even then the money made by the Electric Enterprise Fund would have to come from somewhere else. "It would either have to come from taxes or from reductions," he said.

Commissioner Amy Patterson said the Electric Fund will never be the cash cow it used to be and she and Dotson said the other enterprises in the town (the Sanitation, Water & Sewer Depts.) must begin to pay for themselves.

O'Donnell 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.

Since rates are going up no matter what, Mayor Wilkes wants to help educate the public on saving energy and making their homes more energy efficient.

— Kim Lewicki

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

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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 •

Ooooooh, That's Yoga

As a personal trainer for a diverse group of people, I use many different modes of training to meet the various needs of my clients. I also try to diversify exercises to decrease boredom for my clients in hopes of increasing exercise adherence.

Often times we will be doing a balance, stretching or strength training activity in which my client will exclaim, "Ooooooh, that's Yoga." Another comment I get on a regular basis is, "Oooooh, that's Pilates." My usual response is, "No. This is movement of the human body!"

In most cases my client is correct that the movement is found in Yoga or Pilates. As a trainer I am happy to see that my clients can identify with exercises from other modes of training outside of the gym, because it means they have been to at least one group-exercise class, most likely more.

However, as a movement specialist, it bothers me to see that my client only sees the movement, balance pose or stretch as being part of a designated form of exercise such as Yoga or Pilates. After all, it is not



R. Garrett Tandy Jr.
M.A.Ed.,
Titlest Performance Institute CGFI
Personal Trainer
hatterasboy1@yahoo.com

that Yoga or Pilates invented the movement, truthfully our body created the movement. I feel it is much more valuable for the client to see the importance of the exercise as something they use in their every day living or in a sports related skill.

Don't get me wrong, I am not discrediting Yoga or Pilates; they are wonderful ways to exercise. Most trainers use exercises and poses from the realms of Yoga and Pilates on a regular basis. These types of training certainly enhance a personal trainer's repertoire as they are a great way to supplement a well rounded

training session for our clients and are very helpful when you are trying to specifically target a certain aspect of a workout. My concern is that the client does not realize the benefit the "Yoga" or "Pilates" exercise carries for their body, which should with observed with any exercise.

Also, I am concerned that the client may be using these modes of training exclusively, which should be avoided just as a person should avoid using running or lifting weights as their only form of exercise.

No one form of exercise should be expected to provide sufficient training for all five fitness components (cardiovascular, body composition, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility).

This doesn't mean a person should be afraid to take a Yoga class once or twice a week. However, if Yoga or Pilates is the only exercise a person is doing, perhaps they should think about adding some other methods of training to their weekly exercise routine.

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Rev. Dean Cesa
Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church

If I say that I give you my word, I am sure that you would take this as a pledge from me. That I am being truthful and will do what it is I am saying. It is a statement testing my integrity. If I am true to it, true to my word, you experience that integrity and you realize that you can trust me.

But that's just my word. Think for a moment about God's word. God does not really need to prove his integrity to us (or maybe he does!) We know that there is no instance where God did not make good on his promise. From the very beginning, in the book of Genesis, God merely speaks and it happens. Let there be light and there was light. A powerful word, a truthful word and a creative word is the word that comes to us from God.

After creation, many millennia go by. God begins speaking to his people, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He promises to multiply the offspring of Abraham. Later, in the time of Moses, the people of God become so numerous that they are considered a treat to the Pharaoh. And from enslavement they call out to their God and he speaks again. He takes them on a journey for forty years. He settles them in the promised land.

They begin to stray from him and they experience the consequences of their sin. But God continues to love them, continues to speak his word to them through the prophets to turn back to him from their sin. When they turn back, he welcomes and forgives and continues speaking his word to them. He comforts the afflicted. He afflicts the comfortable.

But none of this is sufficient for God. People listen or not. They heed the warning or ignore it. What can be done to assure humankind that he is not only serious, but reliable, forgiving, loving, compassionate and trustworthy? Finally, he realizes that his word must be made manifest. It cannot just be what is read or heard. It must be experienced, in the flesh, as a human being, standing before us, living the life we live, sharing in all it is to be human – growth, development, satisfactions and disappointments, ups and downs, love and death. He must take on life – human life. He cannot be thought of as only watching from a distance. He must be with us intimately. He must experience all we experience as a human being and then, taking all of it in, redeeming all of it. Then his word will be believed

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 14

John 3:16

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

Proverbs 3:5

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

Thurs.: Women's Prayer Group - 10 a.m., Whiteside Presbyterian Church; Healing Service at noon

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Wed.: 6pm: CBC University Program

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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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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

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Dr. Don Mullen, Parish Associate 526-3175
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Wednesdays – Choir – 7

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Worship, 6:30 p.m.

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

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Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg. – 7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Alfred Sizemore • 526-3212
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p.m.

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

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Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study – 7

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... LETTERS continued from page 2

About the 'H' and Obama

Dear Editor,

Fred Wooldridge's column in the Dec. 21 edition of Highlands' Newspaper, "Oh, for Christ's sake" was very wisely stated about the Muslim attitude toward us and our bad habits.

He mentioned he did not understand where term "Jesus H. Christ" came from. Answer: I was very much involved assisting priests during most of my life. I never went to Seminary or such, but was given the opportunity of assisting in all the other manners available. Here it is:

In the Catholic Books of Symbols you will find this in various form IHS

or I N S. There are some others. These usually appear on the Altar Cloth facing the people at traditional Holy Latin Mass, etc. So some believers just decided on their own that the H was the middle of Our Blessed Lord's name.

The letters usually express either in Latin, or Jewish wording this thought: Jesus Christ the Saviour, or Jesus The Lord, or Jesus the Good Shephard.

On another note: I wrote the publisher, Kim Lewicki, awhile back about Swanson. I just got tired, and I am not alone, of his weekly daily never ending negative discourse on President Obama. Obama has led a pretty clean gentlemanly life. So the only way to go after him is

not on any personal defects but on everything else.

Obama is not saint, but Bush and Cheney, took this country to levels of abuse never before seen in our History. America Torture, rampant killing and destruction of civilians, imprisonment without hearings and on and on.

I am not entirely happy with Obama, but to excuse the others stinks. So I was chosen to write by our little group of friends and neighbors. I brought Wooldridge up in the dialog as an example of something better, but like everything sometimes we overstate ourselves and harm others.

Joe Mathes
Otto, NC

OMG is blasphemy, too

Dear Editor

I agree completely with Fred Wooldridge's Dec. 21 column, "Oh, for Christ sake." Another common blasphemy is, "Oh My God!" OMG is said in response to the most trivial things and I only wonder what they will have to say when they come face-to-face, with God.

I enjoy his wit and appreciate the seriousness in this article.

Richard Norris
Snellville, GA

• THANK YOU •

The Food For Fuel luncheon held December 18, 2011 was a grand success due to the generosity and kindness of our community. The luncheon was a benefit to raise money for The Highlands Emergency Council's Fuel Assistance Program.

I especially want to thank, Cupboard Café, Cindy Lou Batson, Dusty's Superette, Oak Street Café, Southern Belles, and Jan Zehr for their scrumptious mouth watering desserts.

Thank you to Highlands' Newspaper, The Highlander, Duncan Greenlee's Cartoon, and Steve Day of WHLC for their coverage of the benefit. Each of you is always so willing to help. I appreciate your support.

To Joel Porter for his wonderful Pork Tenderloin, Cranberry Chutney, Twice Baked Potatoes, Salad, and Rolls. Everyone should have the opportunity to enjoy his culinary expertise.

To Sally and Dallis Copeland for

their generous donation on Poinsettias for the tables. Thank you to Betty and Don Fisher for transforming Coleman Hall into an eloquent dining experience.

To our wonderful Congregational Care Elder Wilda Boyette for her many hours of work with meetings, e-mails, shopping, and over seeing every detail.

For our behind the scene helpers: Kathy Maps, David Sanborn, and Bruce Sloan thank you for making everything seem effortless.

To our host and hostess: Chris Boltz, Jeanne Christie, Reverend Hunter and Trudie Coleman, Nancy and Rock Curlee, Kathy Evans, Travis and Carol Goodloe, Alexis Healey, Joe Mangum, Obie and Francis Oakley, Hillrie Quin, Darlene Scott, Suzanne Sloan, Teeter and Kay Smith, Bill and Carol Strunk, Bob and Ginny Wright, thank you for the impeccable service.

The air was filled with excitement and giddiness abounded as we carried on our assigned task. This was truly an act of love in which each and every one of us was blessed.

Thank you for your participation and patronage.

Heather Mangum

... SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING from 13

and never doubted.

This is the manifestation we celebrate throughout the twelve days of Christmas. NOT the 12 days BEFORE Christmas, as retailers are wont to use to enhance their profits, but the twelve days from Christmas to Epiphany. Tomorrow is that twelfth day. The birth of the savior is too big an event to be celebrated on only one day. Keep that in mind today, tomorrow, throughout this new year. God is one of us, experiencing life with us, feeling our joys and sorrows, always there or rather here in each one of us. Caring, supporting, helping and loving. That makes this a happy new year.

... NORTHLAND from page 15

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... JUST HERS continued from page 6

robes, catching the eye of a friend and exchanging a smile – and a wink – that's special. The sound of voices raised, singing all those beloved Christmas carols – there's nothing like it. Finally, the service over, we bundle up against the cold, catch a taxi home, and before you know it, we're tucking into smoked salmon and champagne.

If you live in Manhattan, one thing's for sure. You will not be going to Times Square for New Year's Eve. Over 80% of the revelers are from out of town. Standing up for hours in the cold just to watch the ball drop? **Fugetaboutit!** Instead, we

were off to St. Bartholomew's Church for a presentation of Bach's **Brandenburg Concerti**, an annual New Year's Eve Event. The orchestra was so talented, the music sublime. The only downside was our backsides. Tightly packed into the pews, we looked around and noted that many of the regulars had brought cushions. "You know, if anyone were to come back and do this again next year, it might be a good idea for them to bring their own cushions," said Maman slyly.

An organ concert followed, but instead we decided to go home and eat the snails I'd prepared earlier that day. We

watched what was going on in Times Square, but on TV, from the comfort of our own cozy apartment. From the window later on, we saw the tired revelers on their way home, covered in confetti. As midnight crept up on us, however, I remembered my dare spoken largely in jest, to usher in the New Year – and new century – by mooning. The rumor had taken on a life of its own. Several neighbors had even threatened to put out lawn chairs in front of the building. As the countdown began, I started to panic. Downstairs, we could see two women in mink coats banging garbage can lids together to make noise. Car horns started honking on Second Avenue. We could hear loud cheers coming from the two Irish pubs a block away. Oh, well. I walked over to the picture window of my apartment, and without much fanfare, executed what must have been the fastest moon in history. And the least remarkable.

A few days later, it was back to the airport with Maman. We'd had a splendid time. Her suitcases were packed with goodies, and our hearts were packed with memories. We hugged and kissed, and then, suddenly, she was gone. The ride

back into Manhattan was a solemn one. The apartment felt strangely empty. I wasn't even that happy to get my bed back. Even my colleagues at work noticed I was quieter. "Has Maman gone back home?" asked my Bavarian friend, Freddie. When I said that she had, he chuckled. "Guess now they can restock the shelves!" he joked, alluding to my mother's shopping spree.

The next year, Maman called around October. "I was wondering what your plans were for Christmas," she said. "We had such a nice time last year...." she began, with the hint dangling in the air. The year after that, she wasn't even as subtle. "Bonjour," Maman said with enthusiasm. "I've called to give you my flights!"

• Michelle is a writer and translator who moved to Highlands after years of living in Baltimore, Sydney, Paris and New York. She lives in town with her two very spoiled cats, Orion and Weasel. Michelle and her mother, Annette, still talk about those very special Christmases in New York. They hope that you spent your holidays making memories that will live for a lifetime.

• BIZ NEWS •

Northland Communications announces faster internet speeds and new services

December 20, 2011 - Northland Communications is pleased to announce the completion of several projects, which allow Northland to offer three new services for the communities in Macon and Jackson Counties.

Bill Staley, General Manager, said, "These infrastructure projects significantly add to our plant and have enabled us to provide new services for the area." Alan Boggs, Northland's Operations Manager, adds "They allow Northland to deliver a faster, more reliable Internet product called Turbo Premier with speeds up to 12 Mbps and beyond." Both business and residential customers will greatly benefit from faster Internet speeds and more reliability.

Staley commented, "We are extremely excited to offer an Internet product far better than anything previously available in this area."

Local residents will enjoy smoother High Definition video streaming, better gaming, and greater bandwidth so the entire family can enjoy the Internet at the same time without getting bogged down. With Wi-Fi connections, residents can now connect all their Internet-ready devices like tablets, laptops, desktops, gaming consoles, Internet enabled HDTV sets, smart phones, TiVo® DVR, Roku® and others to Northland's faster and more reliable Internet connections.

Staley continues, "In addition to faster Internet, Northland will offer a new, innovative product called Invi TV in January." Invi TV is the next generation experience of television and entertainment.

Invi TV provides Northland customers with a new way to enjoy television offering thousands of choices for the viewer while integrating whole house Internet access with traditional channel surfing.

Northland's Divisional Vice President, Lee Johnson said, "Local businesses will see major improvements and new options with Northland Business Solutions." A variety of affordable business services will be available, including fiber direct services with up to 100 Mbps symmetrical service. Northland will also offer Business Solutions with even greater speeds up to 1 Gbps and customizable solutions for large commercial accounts.

Northland's investment in the area's communication infrastructure provides economic advantages. According to Staley, "The advancements in Internet speed and accessibility are comparable to any large city in the U.S. We firmly believe that our new services not only keep business in our area, but will also help attract new businesses, which will lead to job growth in the long run."

"We are proud to be a part of this great community," Staley says. "We envision a bright future for the Highlands area and we will continue to move forward at full speed by providing exceptional service." Northland is proud to be leading the way to world class Internet and business products in Macon and Jackson counties.

• About Northland Communications: Northland Communications (www.yournorthland.com) is a leading provider of telecommunications services.

• See NORTHLAND page 14

• Salons & Spas •

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... WINTER continued
from page 1

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ting ready for a winter storm is the most important thing you can do to ensure your family's safety." "Getting ready for severe winter weather can also help you get ready for any emergency that may occur."

Before a winter storm — The NC Office of Public Health Preparedness & Response recommends having the following supplies: battery-powered radio and extra batteries, food that can be eaten without cooking, plenty of bottled water (at least one gallon per person per day), candle and matches, enough oil for your furnace for heat, a gas-powered heat source, or some other type of emergency heat source, and a first aid kit plus extras of any needed medicines, prescriptions, or baby items. For your car, start with some bottles of water and food bars, bag of sand to provide traction under the tires, hats, gloves, blankets and a cell phone charger. Make sure you keep the gas tank full to keep the fuel line from freezing.

During a winter storm - If you are caught at home in a winter storm and there is no heat, close off unneeded rooms, stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors, and cover windows at night to reduce heat loss. If you home is heated by an oil-burning furnace, turn down the heat in your house and add layers of clothing to save heating fuel. If you have to use gas heat in your home, open windows slightly so fumes don't build up. It is important to eat and drink to stay warm. Keep replenished with fluids to prevent dehydration and food will provide your body with energy for producing its own heat.

Staying informed - Before, during and after a winter storm, listen for up-to-date information from your local media and emergency officials about road conditions, power outages, shelter openings, and health information. Become familiar with winter weather terms: Winter Storm Advisory means cold, ice and snow are expected — Winter Storm Watch means severe weather is possible in the next day or two, so finalize preparations and listen to weather forecasts — Winter Storm Warning means severe winter conditions have begun or will begin soon.

Make sure are signed up for CODE RED in Macon County. "CODE RED is an emergency alert system used by Macon County Emergency Services to notify the public in the event of an emergency situation in Macon County as well as other critical community alerts." To sign up for this service by going to: www.maconnc.org — Public Safety — Emergency Management and sign up online or call 828-349-2067.



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• BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NEWS •



Christmas for the needy

The First Presbyterian Church Ladies Morning Study Group spent a day before Christmas wrapping packages for an Emergency Family Christmas.

Christmas morning surprise at Eckerd Living Center

Mary Lou and David Fouser of Safety Harbor, Florida handmade more than 60 scarves for each long term care resident at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital's Fidelia Eckerd Living Center. They sent them for the residents to receive as a surprise on Christmas morning.



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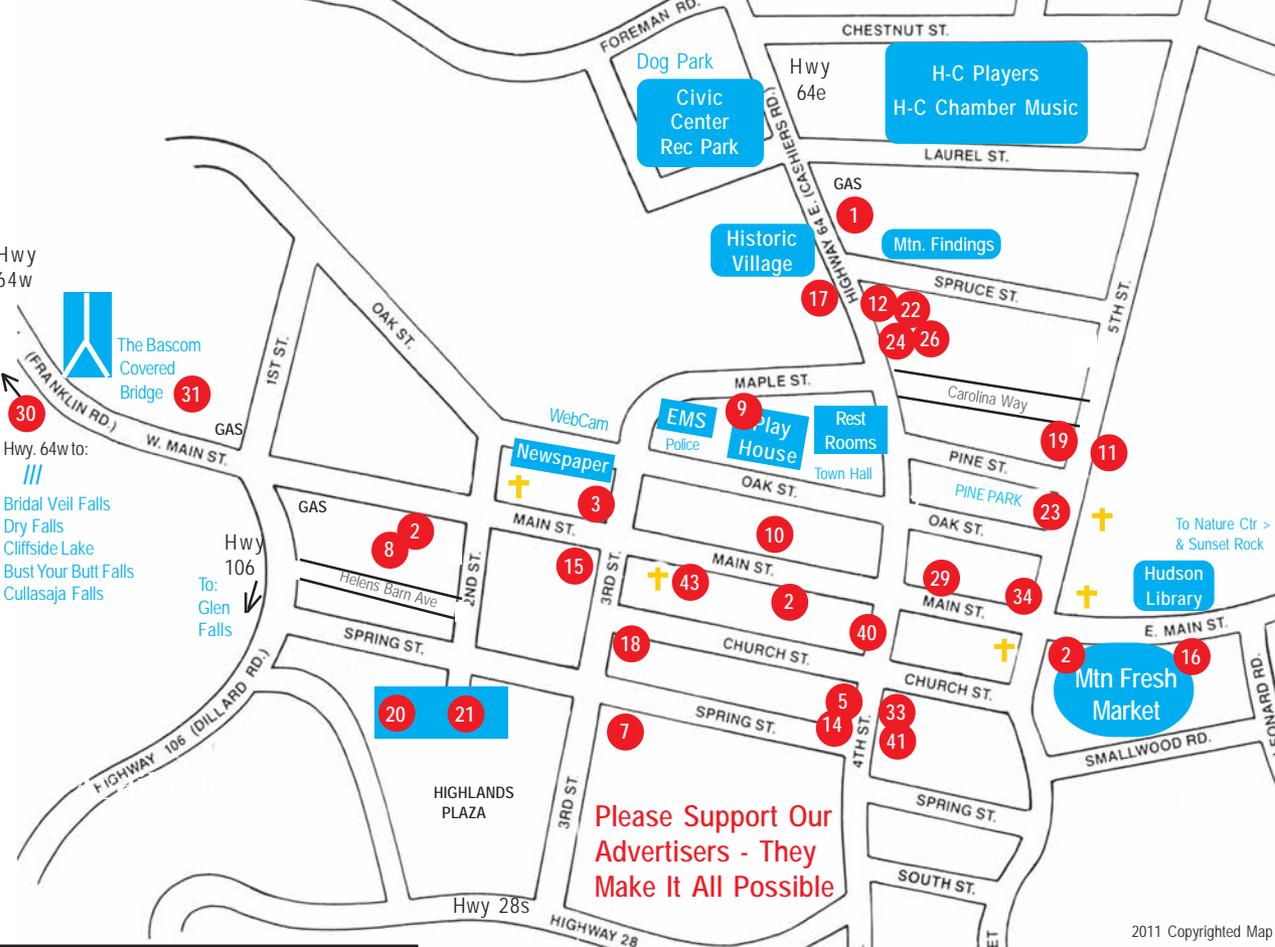
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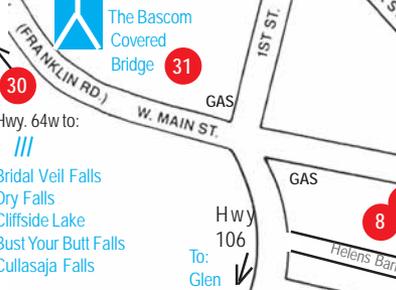



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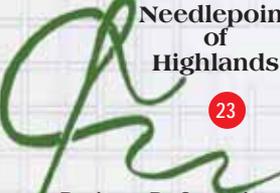
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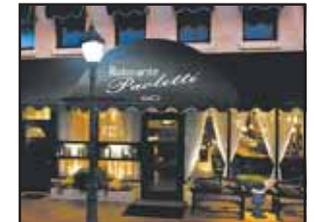
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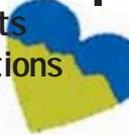
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