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Thursday, April 18, 2013

'Vocher' bill could further cripple public education

Public Schools First NC has gone on the record opposing the new school voucher bill introduced in the General Assembly Tuesday night – H.B. 944 "Opportunity Scholarship."

The bill, which aims to spend \$90 million of taxpayer

money over the next two years to subsidize private school tuition, takes money away from already under-funded public schools — with little accountability to taxpayers, they say.

Bill verbiage says since the state has a constitutional obliga-

tion to fund the delivery of a sound basic education to children; and whereas, children of families with limited financial resources need expanded educational opportunities; and whereas, a solid educational foundation can help reduce the socioeconomic achievement

gap; and whereas, by creating educational environments that enable each child to learn, the state can improve the quality of the education it funds by supporting this program.

•See VOUCHER page 11

County funding employee raises without tax hike

After months of deliberation, commissioners voted to give Macon County employees a pay raise.

The salary increase, which was first suggested by County Manager Jack Horton at the commission retreat in January, cited findings from the Springsted classification and compensation study that showed that the minimum, midpoint and maximum pay ranges for Macon County employees were 21% lower than in the nine other counties in the market survey.

In addition, 55% of the county's employees – 181 employees – make less than the minimum amount for the same job in like counties.

Horton said since the county hasn't had a pay study in more than 10 years, it's not surprising that Macon County is out of step especially since raises were zero in 2009, zero in 2010, 3% in 2011 and zero in 2012.

The annual cost to bring the

55% of employees up to minimum and give a 2% raise to the remaining employees would cost the county \$754,192 per year without raising taxes or taking money out of the fund balance. That figure also includes all benefits and fringes.

To implement the same raises for the balance of FY 2012-'13 it would cost about \$141,000, which also includes benefits and fringes.

Horton said the 2% increase to the 45% of employees already making the minimum would basically bring their salaries back to what they were Dec. 31, 2012 prior to the increase in the FICA tax.

Horton urged commissioners to vote in favor of the salary increases saying "Implementation of the new pay plan will send a strong, positive message to the county's workforce, boost morale, improve productivity, and assist in recruitment efforts."

At the Tuesday regular meeting, commissioners voted 3-2 to grant the increase. Chairman Kevin Corbin said he had no problem with the increases since they were just to the minimum. Vice Chair Commissioner Ronnie Beale said the county employees deserve a fair wage. "Rabun County and Jackson County are higher than we are. We are blessed to have the employees we have and since there will be no tax increase, I'm

•See RAISES page 2



Slowly, the McCall cabin is being renovated for use.

Photo by Kim Lewicki

USFS is bringing Albie McCall's cabin back to life

In 1998, the US Forest Service acquired a period log cabin dubbed the McCall Cabin due to the name of its original inhabitants and moved it from its Blue Valley community to its current location on Wayah Way above Dry Falls on US 64 west.

Artifacts found in and around the cabin during excavation – a golf ball, a toothbrush, quilts, and more – became subjects of a multi-part series by this reporter which opened long-closed windows about life in early Highlands.

A golf ball found during excavation of the cabin site, led to a story about one of the McCall's who worked at the Highlands Country Club in its early days. A

toothbrush lead to a story about early dentistry which involved dentists who traveled on horseback to communities all over western North Carolina and the quilts told a story about the McCall, Picklesimer and Wilson families – all descendants of the last inhabitant of the McCall cabin, Albie Picklesimer McCall, who lived to be 103.

It's taken many years for the USFS to culminate its plans for the cabin – the only sure thing was its location – a peaceful, breezy, mountain-ringed knoll off Wayah Way.

First the cabin was disassembled with each piece numbered

•See CABIN page 5

• Inside •

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Code of Conduct discussed by boards

Rules of Procedure were a subject discussed at both the Planning and the Zoning boards last week, but Planning Board members had the most to say about two items – conflict of interest and attendance.

For years all boards have followed the direction of Town Attorney Bill Coward who contends that there is only a conflict of interest if a board member stands to gain monetarily from a ruling or a decision.

However, that contention doesn't always sit right with the public or board members and so now the definition of a conflict of interest has broadened a bit for Planning Board members.

"No member of the Planning Board shall seek to influence a decision, participate in any action or cast a vote involving any matter that is before the Planning Board which may result in a private benefit to themselves, their immediate relatives or their business interest. A member may be excused from voting if the matter involves the member's own official conduct or if the member has such close personal ties to the applicant that he cannot reasonably

•See CONDUCT page 3

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for it.”

Commissioners Ron Haven and Paul Higdon voted against the increase and have been against it since it was first discussed in January.

Commissioner Jim Tate has supported it from the start only suggesting the county look at revamping its benefit package especially for those who retire after 30 years.

Higdon said the study was flawed because none of the counties tallied bordered Macon County and they didn't represent the same economic situation. He also questioned why government positions were compared to other government positions

and not to similar jobs in the private sector.

He said in the middle of a recession the county shouldn't be giving some employees a 10% raise.

“I appreciate what you do, and some of you are my friends, but this isn't about friendship,” he said to employees in the audience. “We are all hurting in this economy; suffering through this extended recession which I believe we will be in for a long time. It's not fair for taxpayers to compensate you any more.”

Horton explained that a 10% raise for

•See RAISES page 10

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Artist Talk at 6 pm

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Opening Reception:
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from 5 to 7 pm
Curator Talk at 6 pm -
Jane Jackson, former
director of The Sir Elton
John Photography
Collection

Youth Art Exhibit: K-12
April 20 to May 19
Opening Reception:
Saturday, April 27
from 2 to 4 pm

Above left: Linda Anderson, *Forest in the Hydrangea* (detail), 2012
Above right: Edward Burtynsky, *Rock of Ages #1* (Detail), 1991

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... CONDUCT continued from page 1

be expected to exercise sound and impartial judgment on behalf of the public's interest."

When Old Edward Inn (OEI) was seeking permission to rezone 594 Main Street to accommodate a small event venue and needed the Planning Board's recommendation, member Glenda Bell said she had it on legal authority that member Patrick Leonard, who is the Human Resource Director for OEI, should excuse himself due to his relationship with the applicant.

It's not likely the ultimate recommendation to approve the project would have changed, but for some the perception of the proceeding was affected because Leonard didn't excuse himself.

Planning Director David Clabo said under the new rules of conduct it would be up to the board member to declare the circumstances concerning a conflict prior to hearing the case in group or public discussion.

"This could include something that doesn't directly benefit him or her but may benefit a group he is a member of," said

Clabo. "It is the responsibility of members to voice the potential conflict."

If there is a conflict, the member can't participate in the discussion or vote, he said.

The other code of conduct issue discussed was attendance.

Failure to attend three consecutive meetings or missing four meetings in a 12-month period is terms for removal from the board but the Town Board has the final word on the matter.

"This is not about judging the person, but if you aren't attending, your attention is elsewhere, and that's OK, but maybe you should apply to come back on the board at a later date," said Chairman Thomas Craig.

Previously, Clabo said if there was a "good" excuse for missing, not attending was OK. But members agreed that missing is missing.

In addition, if someone can't make a meeting, the planning staff or the chairman of the board needs to be notified by noon the day of a meeting.

Clabo said it's important for his staff and the board to know if a quorum will be present prior to the 5:30p meetings.

Proctors needed at Highlands School

Highlands School will begin end of the year testing in May and we need Proctors. Every testing environment needs a proctor and we have over 100 separate test settings. If you are interested in giving our your time, please call the school office at 526-2147. Dates and times will be discussed then.

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Zoning Board

The final step for the Townplace Condominiums was made Wed., April 10 at the Zoning Board meeting where members voted unanimously to grant the Special Use Permit (SUP).

The only point of discussion was the 40-ft. buffer near the old home on the property which sits inside the 40-ft buffer area so in a couple of places along the back of the home, a 40-ft. buffer isn't possible.

Since the Town Board approved the site plan which clearly shows the encroach-

ment and the fact that the 40-ft. buffer can't be applied at the place of the house site, the board voted unanimously to grant the SUP.

The developer has one year to augment the 40-ft. buffer with Type 2 vegetation and three years to complete the project.

"The SUP starts the clock ticking to get the buffer in and construction started as soon as possible," said Code Enforcement Officer Josh Ward. "However the construction timeline can be extended to five years with Town Board approval.

- Kim Lewicki

• OBITUARY •



Barbie-dae Aziel

Barbie-dae Aziel, 64, born on April 4, 1948 lost her battle to cancer on March 25, 2013 in her Franklin, NC home.

She leaves behind two children, Nina-dae Junker of Highlands, NC and Donald Solins II of Naples, Florida.

Barbie-dae was a very talented artist and poet and throughout her life touched many people with her outgoing personality and creativity; she will be greatly missed by those that knew her.

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Cherie Bennett

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HIGHLANDS AREA UPCOMING EVENTS

Mon., Wed., Fri.

- Step Aerobics with Tina Rogers 8-9a beginning April 1.
- Zumba at the Rec Park, 9:05a-10a. \$5 per class. First class free.

Monday & Wednesday

- Hatha Yoga - Body n' Soul. 7:45a at First Presbyterian Church. R.Y.T and Y.A. (828) 482-2128. (8/29)

Monday & Thursday

- Hatha Yoga - Body n' Soul. 10:45a at the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation. R.Y.T and Y.A. (828) 482-2128. (8/29)

Thurs. April 18

- Taize at Episcopal Church of the Incarnation at 5:30p.

Friday, April 19

- The High Mountain Squares will dance this Friday night at the Macon County Community Building on Route 441 South from 6:30-9p. Richard Smith from Gainsville, GA will be the caller. We dance Western Style

Square Dancing, main/stream and plus levels. There will be a Plus Workshop from 6:30-7p. Everyone is welcome. For information call 828-349-0905.

Sat., April 20

• The Highlands Plateau Greenway will have its monthly work trip this Saturday. Please register with Ran Shaffner by emailing highlandsgreenway@nctv.com or leaving a message at 828-526-5622. Meet at the large upper parking lot (near the pool entrance) behind the Rec Park at 9a for a brief orientation session. Participants will be furnished the necessary tools and safety equipment. Participants should bring water, rain gear, and a day pack to hold them. Wearing clothes that can get dirty is advised.

• A benefit for Tommy Houston at Highlands Civic Center from 3:30-9:30p. Tommy has heart trouble and had to stay one in ICU at Mission Hospital. Tommy does not have any health insurance and has a lot of medical expenses. Come and enjoy a hot dog dinner, singing, and auction.

• Earth Day and Summer volunteer opportunities at the Highlands Biological Garden. Work is needed on trails, near the garden entrance and fern and woodland loop trails from 10a to noon. To participate in the Earth Day Volunteer Celebration, or any of the monthly workdays, call Erika Selman know in advance (828) 526-0188 or e-mailing emselman@email.wcu.edu.

• OEI sponsored Kickball Tournament for Relay for Life, 11a to 3p at the Highlands ballfield. 45-minute games, 5 innings. To sign up contact Dave Linn at bringingit2life@yahoo.com or 828-421-7637.

Monday, April 22

• Mirror Lake Association quarterly meeting at the Rec Park at 6 p.m.
• Earth Day celebration, "We Recycle!" sponsored by Macon Pride from 10a to 4p at the Big Bear Shelter, Greenway entrance, on E. Main St. at the Little TN. River Bridge. Bring your cans, bottles, paper and your questions. Macon Pride team members will be there to offer answers! Macon Pride will "man" the County small mobile recycling trailer for your recycling ease, information and give directions to the 10 Macon Co. Recycling Drop Off and Convenience Centers as well as the Macon Co. Landfill. Our goal is to keep Macon County beautiful, and economically viable. We can help you learn how to help us help our county. Call Debby Boots, 349-5201 or Shirley Ches, 524-9991

Tuesday, April 23

• At Highlands Dialogue at Hudson Library 10-11:30a, America's Founding Father's Detested the Paradise of Delightful Debauchery and Freedom that was 18th Century America." Handout available at the Library. Bill West will coordinate.

Thurs.-Sun., April 25-28

• The PAC Youth Theater presents "John Lennon and Me" at the Performing Arts Center. Shows are at 7:30p and 2:30p Sunday matinee.

Thursday, April 25

• Dine out in Highlands for AIDS. Cyprus International Restaurant and Wolfgang's are contributing 20% of their dinner sales to WNCAP.

• At the Macon County Health Clinic, 8 am to noon, free screenings for stroke and oral cancer. The stroke screening includes cholesterol, glucose, and blood pressure, and BMI. Free giveaways and educational displays will also be featured. From noon to 2 pm, tour the new facility located at 108 Macon Center Drive and meet Dr. Kaldre his staff. Appointments for the screenings are required, so call 349-2425, to reserve your slot.

Sat., April 27

• Car show fundraiser for Care Net. 10a to 3p at Sonic on 441 (GA Rd.) Registration \$10. For more information call 828-349-0986.

Thurs., May 2

- Taize at HUMC at 5:30p.

Monday, May 6

• Rotary Club of Highland's Annual Golf Tournament at the Highlands Country Club. Registration, the driving range and the practice green will open at 11 am with a noon shotgun start. Lunch at the turn and beverages on the course, and a HCC logo Tervis Tumbler. There will be a closest to the pin and long drive competitions, raffles and Mulligans on sale for only \$5. Entry fee is \$150 per player and ALL proceeds benefit the Rotary Club of Highlands. Sign up alone or as part of a foursome. To sign up contact Joyce Baillargeon at 828-526-0501 or email jbaillargeon@highlandscountryclub.com

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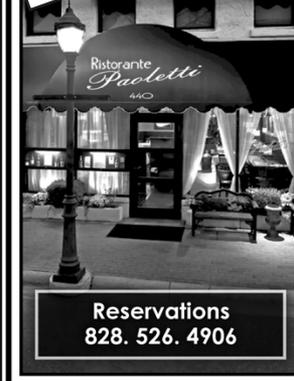


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• LEGISLATIVE UPDATE ... IN THEIR WORDS •

• In this weekly series, legislators will inform constituents of their dealings in Washington, Raleigh and Macon County – in their own words.

Meadows introduces legislation to restore common sense in Federal Employee Compensation

Washington, D.C. – Representative Mark Meadows (NC-11) released the following statement after introducing the Common Sense in Compensation Act of 2013.

This legislation would prohibit federal employee bonuses for the rest of Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 and cap bonuses at a maximum of 5% of salary through the end of FY 2015. Not meant to stifle merit-based pay, this legislation would give federal agencies the option to give out individual bonuses on a situational basis if justified in writing.

“Over the past two months, federal official after federal official has talked about the need to furlough employees due to sequestration,” Meadows said. “Yet, the government has been handing out millions of dollars in bonuses to federal em-



Mark Meadows (Rep.)
US Congressman, NC, 11th District

ployees. Forcing regular, often blue-collar federal workers to face furloughs while senior employees cash in is unacceptable. That is why I introduced the Common Sense in Compensation Act today.

“In FY 2010, 75% of Senior Executive Service employees received bonuses at an average of \$13,081 per person. The Federal Aviation Administration has been threatening 90-minute waits for airline passengers, but they handed out bonuses at or above \$40,000 to 86 employees in FY 2011. The federal government has no business handing out millions in bonuses to senior-level staff while beginning to furlough other employees. These bonuses exemplify Washington’s spending problem, and we need sound legislation to restore common sense in federal employee compensation.”

... CABIN continued from page 1

so it could be authentically reassembled. Though it’s taken years to get it to where it is today, each year bringing the cabin back to life is closer to becoming a reality.

According to Mike Wilkins, Nantahala District Forest Ranger, the project has turned out well and he hopes to complete it sometime during FY 2013-’14.

The chinking between the logs was completed last fall and windows and doors were added as well as a back porch, which had to be rebuilt after termites got into a footer that was installed incorrectly.

The exterior is now complete, but there is still work to do inside.

Floor beams are in but the USFS is seeking funding to floor the downstairs and the upstairs loft area.

“We have tentative plans to floor it

next fiscal year,” said Wilkins. “Our fiscal year begins Oct 1. We will have to find funds to complete the cabin and are looking at a couple funding sources.”

Wilkins said the USFS is considering several options as to the cabin’s use. One idea would be to rent it out for an Appalachian cabin experience and try to outfit it fitting with the period.

“That way the public would get to use it and get a sense of what it was like as well as learn about the history of the cabin,” he said.

Like all “cabins” it would be put on the national reservation system so a vault toilet, a picnic table, a fire ring and a lantern post would have to be installed on the property.

– Kim Lewicki

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• INVESTING AT 4,118 FT. •

The rise of activity in markets that feed Highlands, NC real estate

When there is an interesting occurrence in the Highlands, NC real estate market, I investigate and probe to see if the phenomenon is a harbinger of things to come or if it is a simple outlier.

Last week, we received a call from a gentleman who had just put his house in Atlanta under contract. He noted he was ready to make a purchase in the Highlands area. (At that point, there was nothing extraordinary about his situation.) His story, however, rapidly became intriguing when he said his house wasn't even on the market (he was just approached by a Buyer in hopes he would sell), and that he would soon have approximately \$1M in cash from the sale to invest in our market.

Back in the boon times of the real estate market, such occurrences were commonplace. Post-market crash, however,



Susie de Ville
Owner/Broker-in-Charge
White Oak Realty Group

such stories had disappeared.

So, I started doing some research into three of our classic, feeder markets: Atlanta, Charlotte, and Naples. What I found was fascinating!

Residential contracts for future construction in the metro Atlanta area rose 48% in February of this year. Residential closings in Charlotte jumped 24.9% in March. In Naples, median home prices increased 17%, and pending and closed sales increased in the double-digit range in the \$300K-\$500K and \$1M-\$2M categories. Inventory is down across each of these markets, creating scenarios as the one I described above, as well as pressure on prices.

What does this mean for the Highlands-Cashiers real estate market?

My prediction is that we will see a

• See INVESTING page 11



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• COACH'S CORNER •

A tradition unlike any other...finally

Typically, I am the type of ADD person who pooh poohs all over the idea of watching golf on television. I can't even play golf and enjoy it (although my freakishly long arms and height make that more difficult than normal) much less attempt to watch it on television. However, this year, for the first time in a long while, I watched quite a bit of The Masters on television and came away with several observations.

1. I much appreciate the reverence that people hold Augusta National with, but there comes a point when the TV commentators just need to let the atmosphere breathe for itself rather than beat us over the head with it. It's only natural to question things when Jim Nantz tells them to us for the 400th time.

2. How cool is it that a kid the same age as my high school freshmen was out there competing in the Masters? I felt like most of my freshmen basketball players were pretty composed, but they occasionally had the jitters in a high school game-I can't even imagine putting them in the type of pressure cooker atmosphere of a PGA event...and

'If I were a book' writing contest deadline is May 6

Monday, May 6 is the entry deadline for the "If I were a book" middle-school writing contest, sponsored by the Cashiers Writer's Group and the Friends of the Albert Carlton Cashiers Community Library. There are two categories: poetry and prose. The piece(s) must begin with the words "If I were a book," and can be as long as 325 words. Forms are available at the library or by calling Kathie Blozan at 743-1765. Teachers in Cashiers and Highlands also have forms. Homeschoolers are encouraged to submit work as well. Winners will be invited to read their work at Poetry Night at the Cashiers Library. First place winners will receive a Kindle and have their work published in the Laurel Magazine. Second place winners will receive a gift certificate for Chapter 2 Book Store.



Ryan Potts
tryanpotts@hotmail.com

then throw in that it is THE MASTERS—simply astounding.

3. Let me preface this by saying that I really don't like Tiger Woods. Not even a little bit. However, I thought the decision to penalize him was fair. First of all, the rules of disqualification were tweaked a few years ago for this very situation, so as to add a degree of shade to the black and white rule. Secondly, Tiger is good for ratings, which means that he need-

ed to stay.

4. What a fabulous ending sequence put on by Adam Scott and Angel Cabrera. After Scott birdied the 18th, I told my wife that he deserved his awkward white guy celebration because he had all but won the Masters. Then, Cabrera struck with an unbelievable approach to ensure a tying birdie. As much as we've heard about the concept of someone "winning" a PGA event as opposed to someone "losing" it through a choke or mistake, this was a pretty shining example, with two players matching one another shot for shot. Awesome finish this year and pretty much the type of thing that everyone hopes for when tuning in each and every year.

5. I still won't be watching much golf on television. Or playing it.

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Spring Home Improvement

The Top 5 Home Improvement Projects That Increase Your Home's Value

(StatePoint) Selling a home in today's aggressive marketplace can be challenging. The good news is there are a few tweaks that can give homeowners a serious leg up on the competition.

With the warmer months being the most active time of year to buy and sell real estate, it's important to ensure your home is seen in the best light possible.

According to Homes.com, the top five projects that improve home equity are:

Bathrooms

If adding an additional bathroom isn't an option, upgrade existing ones.

Adding a dual vanity to a master or secondary bath improves functionality, allowing multiple people to use the space. Change out fixtures like faucets and shower doors to increase aesthetic appeal. If you're on a budget, replace light fixtures or

switch plates to help refresh the space.

When working with a small space, highlight storage options with shelving and update or remove wall decor, paint or wallpaper.

Kitchen

Kitchen renovations can cost anywhere from \$20,000 to \$40,000 and more. If that's not in your budget, upgrading cabinetry and paint does wonders to liven up even the most outdated spaces.

Add crown or decorative molding to "shape out" the kitchen cabinets and modernize the space. Repaint cabinets, or add new hardware to add visual interest and brighten dark spaces.

Outdoor Spaces

Curb appeal adds immediate interest to any home's exterior. According to Remodeling Magazine, improving outdoor spaces can in-

crease a home's resale value dollar-for-dollar.

Frame the front walkway with items that add visual interest, like flowers, potted plants, large rocks of various sizes and solar-powered lights. If yard space is scarce, hanging plants are another great, low-cost option.

Extend outdoor projects to the backyard – power-wash decks or patios and clean screened-in areas.

Basement

Basement improvements can optimize livable space and protect the home from extreme weather, mold, moisture damage and mites. Whether transitioning the basement to a home gym, office or family room, the basics remain the same: insulate well and waterproof.

Maximize space by including shelving and storage units. If the opportunity ex-

ists, make the space feel open and inviting by creating an open stairwell, a trick that visually connects the upper part of the house with the lower, and filters natural light into the space.

Mudroom

Mudrooms ensure families stay clutter-free and have a dedicated space to drop stuff as they come through the door. They can also make potential homeowners feel welcome upon entry. While knocking out a wall to create a mudroom is expensive and labor-intensive, you can make a "drop zone" by simply anchoring a bench to an empty wall and hanging labeled storage units.

Making homes stand out in a sea of real estate listings isn't always easy.

More tips on increasing home values can be found at www.Homes.com.



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Spring Home Improvement

Unique Upgrades to Your Home Can Make it Stand Out

(StatePoint) Remodeling your home? Don't just keep up with the Joneses. Go a step further by giving your home truly unique upgrades.

Experts say that one great way to be distinctive and add value to your home is by going natural.

So if you're thinking of redoing your countertops, floors, walls or other key home elements like no one else on your block, think marble, granite and salvaged lumber.

"There is no way to duplicate nature in a laboratory or manufacturing environment," says Garen Distelhorst, Communications Director at the Marble Institute of America. "Natural stone is quarried from rock beds formed over millions of years. You're never going to find two pieces exactly alike."

Here are some benefits of natural materials for you to consider

• **Return on Investment:** In many cases, marble and

granite are less expensive than other premium materials and add value to a home when it's time to sell. According to the most current data available, natural stone recovered between 80 to 86 percent of its remodeling cost at the time of resale.

• **Durability:** The ancient civilizations were onto something when they built their cities. Natural stone stands up to weathering and time better than any other building material, natural or man-made. Stone floors, countertops and wall cladding will last for at least 100 years in many cases. Likewise, salvaged lumber is old growth wood, which means it's stronger and has tighter wood grains than new lumber and can give your home project historical value.

• **Sustainability:** Natural stone is an environmentally friendly choice because it's nearly 100% recyclable and is not bonded by petroleum based resins or created in a



factory. And because of its durability, it won't need to be replaced for a long time.

• **Versatility:** The number of different colors, patterns and textures of natural stone is limitless. This may make finding the perfect cuts to fit your design needs a bit of a chore, but what you end up with will be unique to your home. And different finishes and edge treatments can lend the same kind of stone a different quality and look, making it ideal for various ap-

plications – from floors to walls to fireplaces to roofing shingles.

• **Cleaning:** You can toss aside the heavy duty cleaners that irritate your eyes and nose. Warm water, mild dish-washing liquid and a soft cloth are all that is needed for regular maintenance of most natural stone surfaces.

By avoiding synthetic materials, you can give your home classic upgrades that are durable, beautiful and easy to maintain.



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Whitney Billingsley with Tallulah player.

Photo by Lisa Osteen

Lady Highlanders whip Tallulah Falls, Swain

By Ryan Potts

The Highlands Lady Highlanders soccer team took care of business this week with blowout victories over the Tallulah Falls Lady Indians and the Swain Lady Devils. Last week, the Highlanders defeated the Lady Indians by a score of 9-0. Mary-Gillian Renfro posted 4 goals for the Lady Highlanders, and Kirstyn Lamb added a hat trick of her own. Hayden Bates and Rebekah Parks also added goals for the Lady Highlanders, and GK Ashlee Maitland and the Lady Highlander defense posted the shutout.

On Monday, the Highlanders traveled to Bryson City and throttled the Lady Devils by a score of 7-1. Rebekah Parks, Lamb and Renfro all scored two goals for Highlands and Bates added a goal to round out the scoring. The Lady Highlanders will travel to Rabun County on Thursday to face the Lady Wildcats in a game that was rescheduled due to weather. The next Highlands home game is April 24th, as the Lady Highlanders will host the Lady Razorbacks from Walhalla.

... RAISES from page 2

someone making \$10 an hour – which represents a number of county employees – is only a \$1 extra an hour, but Higdon could not be swayed.

He also claimed that Macon County was overstaffed and the compensation and classification study didn't offer enough information on staffing.

However, Horton said according to the Spingsted staffing in Macon County is very lean.

At Corbin's probing, Horton said there would not be a tax increase next year to fund the salary increases for FY 2013-'14.

"If a tax increase was needed to accomplish this, the increases wouldn't be a recommendation at this time," he said. "The only way there would be a tax increase is if the state decides there is something we have to pay for that we didn't plan for."

– Kim Lewicki

John 3:16

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

Proverbs 3:5

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... VOUCHER from page 1

The wording suggests that the public school system isn't adequately educating North Carolina students but doesn't offer specifics, said Macon County Interim Superintendent Jim Duncan.

"I really feel some legislators are going after public education big time," said Duncan. "I honestly feel there is this intent to say that what we are doing with the public school dollar is not getting the job done or not getting what they want done. But what is that?"

Duncan said the universal public education system in the United States has rules and regulations which public schools are absolutely required to follow, largely to provide children with learning opportunities no matter their social economic standing, physical or mental handicaps, disabilities or anything else.

• See VOUCHER page 14

... INVESTING continued from page 6

similar surge in our activity (we are already seeing the beginnings of it), and that by fall, the increase will be realized across all price points and market niches. Our feeder markets often represent what I refer to as the "lead domino" for our market, and once the dominos begin moving in those areas, we see the impact positively rippling through the Highlands-Cashiers market.

Smart pricing remains as critical as ever, however. Our investors are value driven and are extraordinarily market savvy. Stay in line with market values, or you will run the risk of being completely ignored by the market. Begin considering your own next move and/or investment once you sell, as that time is growing ever near.

• Susie deVillie, ME, ABR, SFR, is Owner/Broker-in-Charge of White Oak Realty Group. Her areas of expertise include real estate investments, niche marketing, so-

cial media, and strategic property positioning. An expert in entrepreneurship and anthropology, Susie applies her acumen in human behavior toward negotiating and advocating on behalf of her cli-

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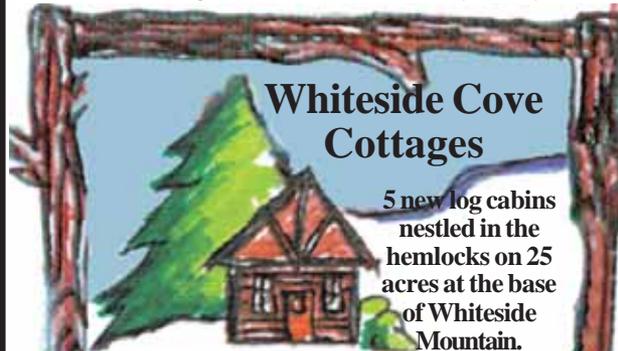
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... **VOUCHER** continued from page 11

"That's the nature of the public school environment, but it's not the nature of the private sector environment," he said. "They often pick and choose their students."

Public Schools First NC says vouchers are a failing proposition all around. They fail to help the students who most need them, they provide little benefit for the students who do use them, and they drain resources from the one public institution best situated to educate all children – the public schools, they say.

Public Schools First NC claims evidence shows that the intended recipients of voucher programs are seldom the students who make use of them. Even lower to middle income families who try to use the \$4,200 voucher will still be left with a tuition balance they cannot afford, they say. Vouchers are more likely to be used by those who would be able to choose private schools anyway.

Duncan said the state's reversion policy, which allocates funds to public school systems and then requires a portion to be sent back, is crippling local school districts. Macon County had to give \$1 million back last year and fund 54 teachers locally, that's with county funds.

"If the state doesn't have enough money to give to Macon County which has earned it through the required formula, and then takes money back through the reversion, how can it now turn around and give it to someone in the form of a scholarship? It just doesn't seem right," he said. "The state is taking money from the public schools but by law our buildings still have to stay open. We can't go out of business like a private school can."

Public School First NC says vouchers drain resources from the one institution that must accept and educate all children who walk through their doors – the public

schools. The North Carolina Constitution guarantees a sound basic education to all children. A \$90 million giveaway from the public schools will have real and serious consequences for the quality of instruction that public schools will provide. The most disadvantaged students are the most likely to remain in public schools, which will be asked to do ever more with less, they say.

Duncan said it's likely the bill is coming out of a perceived need in large metropolitan areas in the state where the community may not think their children are getting the best education.

"But offering this voucher program so children can attend a private school in Macon County may be offering false hope simply because there are not a lot of private school choices here," he said. "I think people should have some choices, but those choices need to be on a level playing field."

He said in addition the bill raises nu-

merous questions as to teacher qualifications, student performance requirements, disciplinary aspects and much more.

"If a student opts to take the \$4,200 voucher and go to a private school and then gets kicked out for academic or disciplinary reasons, they would have to come back to the public school. Do we get that money back?" he asked. "The devil is in the details and there are lots of unanswered questions concerning guidelines at every juncture."

Yevonne Brannon, Chair, Public Schools First NC said using public dollars to fund schools that cannot serve all students violates the NC Constitution, and is a misuse of public tax dollars. "This is a cynical approach to strengthening education and will result in a public school system that is highly segregated by income and race," she said.

H.B. 944 passed the first reading.

– **Kim Lewicki**

• POLICE & FIRE •

Highlands PD log entries from March 8 Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor, or public officials have been used.

Feb. 28

• At 12:30 p.m., Tiffany Dawn Cullins, 22, of Franklin, was arrested for larceny shoplifting and forgery and counterfeiting. Her court date was April 4.

April 3

• A little past midnight, Angela Maria, Sanchez-Colon, 24 of Franklin, was arrested for DWI and speeding on NC 28 south.

• At 11:30 a.m., officers responded to call about barking dogs on Wingina Place.

April 4

• At 8:30 a.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on Oak Street.

• At 10:45 a.m., officers were called about a suspicious person who entered Rosenthal's on Main Street and was acting peculiar.

April 5

• At 11:30 a.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident Spring Street.

• At 9:49 p.m., officers were called to The Farmer's Market about a man who had methamphetamine, drug paraphernalia and weapons including firearms, ammunition and knives.

• At 9:50 p.m., Frank William Elliot, 33, of Clayton, GA, was arrested for possession of a handgun, methamphetamine and drug paraphernalia. His trial date is April 18.

April 6

• At 6 p.m., officers responded to a call about the theft of a canoe on the Mirror Lake embankment.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log

entries from April 3.

April 3

• At 12:28 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call on Pierson Drive. EMS transported.

• At 9:42 p.m., the dept responded to a vehicle accident on US 64 west. Members provided traffic control and cleaned up oil.

April 4

• At 12:47 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Holt Road. EMS transported.

April 5

• At 11:43 a.m., the dept. responded to an alarm at the hospital. It was false.

• At 3:15 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Highlands View. EMS transported.

• At 4:52 p.m., the dept was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at Club House Drive. EMS transported.

April 6

• At 8:43 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at the hospital. It was false.

April 7

• At 9:03 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Highlands Walk. EMS transported.

• At 5:41 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on South Old Walhalla Road. It was set off by a real estate agent.

April 8

• At 10:22 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Satulah Road. It was false.

• At 10:14 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Harris Drive. EMS transported.

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PAC Youth Theater's 'John Lennon & Me' opens April 25

The PAC Youth Theater is in full rehearsal mode. Pictured is a dance rehearsal featuring Choreographer Kaycee Carver with Katherine Potts, David Long, Raven Westbrook, Brooke Rehmeier and Abby Gilbert. Kaycee is currently attending the University of Georgia and is a PAC Youth Theater graduate. Be sure to come see this year's production of John Lennon & Me. Opening Thursday, April 25 and continuing the 26th, 27th and 28th. Evening performances begin at 7:30 and the Sunday matinee begins at 2:30. Tickets may be purchased by calling: 828.526.9047 or online: www.highlandspac.org.

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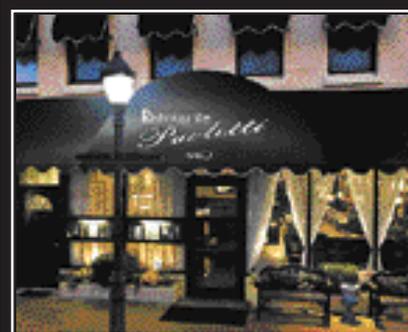
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