

Highlands Newspaper

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Thursday, Feb. 21, 2013

Highlands' utility woes discussed; saga continues

Utilities is still a hot topic in town and so it was discussed at length during the Town Board's annual retreat held Thursday of last week.

Town Manager Bob Frye noted several findings concerning

utility accounts.

First, the same people are delinquent every month – which isn't a surprise. If citizens can't afford utilities in August, they probably can't afford them in January. So he questioned the logic

of sending a letter or making a phone call warning about cut-off dates when it's the same people every time, but said it will be done.

Also there are a few commercial accounts which are continually behind and when staff goes

out to turn off the power owners come out and ask them not to.

But Frye said if someone comes out to turn off the utilities, it's too late. "If we come out there, it's going to be cut off. People need

• See UTILITIES page 11

Repairs at HS to begin over Spring break

The \$1.5 million in improvements to Highlands School is set to begin as early as March 25.

During Spring Break, the asbestos in the glue under the tile floor will be removed – a necessary step prior to the major improvements which will begin as soon as school is out the end of May.

"The asbestos removal needs to be done prior to the job beginning," said County Manager Jack Horton at the Feb. 12 county commission meeting. "It's the glue that has asbestos in it, nothing else."

The reimbursement resolution for the QZAB interest-free, 10-year loan has already been initiated and the \$50,000 estimated cost to remove the asbestos will be reimbursed the county from the QZAB funds.

Commissioner Ronnie Beale said he wanted it understood that it's not asbestos that's flying around airborne. "It's in

the glue, but this can't be done with people in the building."

It will take about three months to complete the improvements to the elementary wing which include new ceilings, floors, HVAC, windows and painting in halls and classrooms.

"I think you are going to get a good deal," said Interim Superintendent Jim Duncan. "This is a great project, which is very much needed in the school."

At the January 8 County Commission public hearing on the issue, Kindergarten teacher Ashley Coppage and mother and Highlands School alumnae Jennifer Forrester thanked the commission for committing the funds to improving the elementary wing.

"On behalf of faculty and staff I want to say we are thrilled at the renovations and they will be wonderful for the school. Glue comes up through the floors and even when it's fixed it comes right back. Our air conditioners in the windows are surrounded by duct tape and plastic bags and still the air comes in," said Coppage.

She said the air-conditioners are also very loud so she can't turn them on during instruction.

"We have to turn them on when the kids aren't in the room and turn them off for direct instruction and with kindergarten-

• See REPAIRS page 8

HS boys clinch championship



Tyler Munger doing a layup at the Blue Ridge game that made HS champs. See story page 7. Photo by Lisa Osteen.

EMS crews getting new defibs

Macon County Emergency Services will soon have high-tech defibrillators ending worries about old, outdated equipment failing at the worst moment.

At the Feb. 12 and 18 Macon

County Commission meetings, commissioners weighed the pros and cons of making the \$374,000 financial commitment for 12 new

• See DEFIBS page 3

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New pool and repairs in works for Rec Park

It doesn't look like a covered, year-round pool is in the cards for Highlands, but if all goes as hoped, a bigger, better, brand new pool complex could become a reality.

At Thursday's retreat, the Town Board heard from Recreation Director Lester Norris about the need for and possible location of a new pool complex.

Turns out the old pool, which is 28 years old and has never been upgraded, isn't worth salvaging. Over the next three years it will need a minimum of \$20,000 in structural repairs each year totaling \$60,000.

"It's getting to the point that Band-Aids can no longer keep the pool going," said Norris.

Since the Macon County Commission has agreed to help either fund repairs or construction of a new pool, and since it's not likely the commission will want to throw good money after bad, the Town Board is leaning toward a new pool.

Meanwhile, \$20,000 is needed to repair the pool in the short-term so it can be opened this summer.

Town Manager Bob Frye said the town has to come up with

• See REC PARK page 14

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• LETTERS •

Thanks for disclosing, but...

Dear Editor,

Referring to Jan 17 Highlands Newspaper edition in which you explain your leanings in the letter "Satire is Fiction," thank you Fred Wooldridge for explaining more about your life and experiences as a Miami police officer so that readers can understand who you really are and how you really feel.

But, satire and sarcasm can be interpreted as mean-spirited even though that may not be the intention. I, too, thought that you were either a racist or that you just liked getting people "worked up" for the fun of it to see their reactions.

I am a fair-skinned, white female who lived for many years in Hawaii where I was in the minority. My then husband was Hawaiian/Chinese. My family in Florida has many Hispanic members through marriage. To me, experiencing other cultures makes life more interesting. So I don't live in a "white ivory tower."

As far as I know, Highlands began as a community of people mostly of Scot/Irish/English ancestry. However, today Highlands is becoming more and more diversified. And, yes, a black family did live here up until a few weeks ago. They left for business reasons.

Although Highlands is small I don't think any of us can be totally certain of who is living here and who is not.

From my experience Highlands is a very tolerant, friendly and welcoming place for many kinds of people regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, sex or sexual preference. Not every small community whose families have lived there for decades could be so tolerant and welcoming and able to adjust and adapt to the changes created by the large influx and mix of newcomers over the years as Highlands has.

I say Hooray for Highlands.

Judith Kaiser
Highlands

The truth about weapons

Dear Editor,

Recent discussions of so-called "assault rifles" in both the media and legislative arenas have seen imprecise usage of the terms used to describe such firearms. This fact sheet is designed to improve the technical accuracy of future discussions and to dispel the myth that just because a weapon is "scary looking" to some doesn't automatically make it an assault weapon as the term is properly defined.

ASSAULT RIFLE: This term was coined during World War II. It is a translation of the German "Sturmgewehr." Two key characteristics that identify "assault rifles" are full automatic fire and detachable magazines with a capacity of 20 or more cartridges. These weapons were designed to produce roughly aimed bursts of full automatic fire. While some assault rifles offer an option of semiautomatic fire (i.e., single-shot), all true assault rifles fire at least fully automatic.

SELF-LOADING: Weapons generally called semiautomatic today were originally called self-loading. This more precise term indicates that the fired cartridge provides energy to reload the weapon for the next shot. Such self-powered arms may be semiautomatic, full automatic, or have a means of selecting one or the other.

SEMIAUTOMATIC: In such weapons, the operating mechanism is designed to permit only a single shot, with each pull of the trigger.

Further, for those who believe, because they have been propagandized to believe it,

AR-15 does NOT mean assault rifle-15. AR happens to be the first two letters of the corporation that makes the AR-15, ArmaLite. It is not impossible or illegal for people to actually own true assault weapons (machine guns) assuming that they can afford them and that they can jump through all the hoops.

To those who say that people don't "need" semi-automatics with 30-round or 75 or even 100-round magazines, I say to you that it is not necessarily a matter of "need" but a matter of rights. People have the right to defend their lives and the lives of others and, when necessary, to overthrow a tyrannical government. The founders recognized those facts when they wrote the Declaration of Independence. It says, in part:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security...."

And I say that when we have someone sitting in the White House who believes that he is an emperor and has the authority to have American citizens murdered without any due process, that is tyrannical.

Danny Crane
Highlands

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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• OBITUARIES •



Doris Jean (Jeannie) Resce

Doris Jean (Jeannie) Resce died February 14 peacefully at her home in Highlands. She was born June 2, 1920 in Society Hill, SC the youngest of seven children.

While going to school in Charleston, SC she met her first husband Norman Mosely and they moved to Coral Gables, FL where she lived for many years. She was predeceased by Norman and later married Walter (Butch) Resce and began to divide her time between Highlands and Florida.

While in Highlands she was a member of Wildcat Cliffs Country Club where she loved to play golf. She also was a long-time member of The Church of The Incarnation serving on the Flower Guild, Alter Guild and as a past vestry member. Jeannie also spent many hours painting and doing needle point.

Jeannie is survived by her son Norman Mosely, Jr. (Suzy) of Highlands and a daughter Jean Mosely of Houston, TX; two granddaughters, Janet Latham (Dr. Bryan) of Elon, NC and Lisa Durham (Todd) of Denver, CO; three great grandchildren, Christopher Latham, Alexis Durham and Lindsey Durham, and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, February 19, 2013 at The Church of The Incarnation of Highlands with Father Bruce Walker officiating. Burial was in Highlands Memorial Park.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to The Church of the Incarnation Bell Tower Endowment Fund or Flower Guild, 530 Main Street, Highlands, NC 28741.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Martha Louise Talley Reese

Martha Louise Talley Reese, age 83, of Highlands, NC died Saturday, February 16, 2013 at a local hospital. She was a native of Macon County; the daughter of the late Marcus Leonard and Charlotte Keener Talley. She was married to the late Wayne Allen Reese who died in 2005. Martha was a member of First Baptist Church of Highlands.

She is survived by two daughters, Wan-



**Martha
Louise Talley
Reese**

da Wright of Highlands, NC and Sherry Reese of Franklin, NC; two sons, Dennis Reese of Arden, NC and Allen Reese of Highlands, NC; four sisters, Sarah Davis of Otto, NC, Eva Marshall of Mt. Kisco, NY, Berta Lee Darci of Flippin, AK and Beatrice Ruhl of Havelock, NC; two brothers Charles Talley of Elkins, NC and Clifford Talley of Highlands, NC, and seven grandchildren, Robbie, Darin, Bradley, Shannon, Trent, Stacy and Danae, and 5 great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by two brothers Gordon and Lewis Talley.

The services were held Monday, February 18, 2013 at First Baptist Church of Highlands with Dr. Mark Ford and Rev. Jim Kinard officiating.

Pallbearers were Mike Keener, Wymer Bryson, James Ramey, Buddy Kremser, R. L. Wilson and Bill Reese.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Vasculitis Foundation, PO Box 28660, Kansas City, MO 64188.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

... DEFIBS from page 1 machines.

According to David Key, the county's EMS director, the defibrillators currently in use are old, outdated and as they age are becoming unreliable. Just recently, two of them failed.

Tim Nettles with Zoll Medical Corporation spent much of the Feb. 12 meeting explaining and demonstrating the benefits of the multi-phase X Series Manual Monitor/Defibrillator which is actually four machines in one. The machines take blood pressure, measures oxygen and carbon monoxide in the blood, as well as defibrillate.

"These are not just for cardio patients, they will be used on everyone and it will enable us to standardize our entire fleet," said Key.

In addition, Nettles demonstrated the Auto-Pulse CPR machine, three of which would be included in the package for free – a \$48,000 value – if 12 defibrillators were purchased.

•See DEFIBS page 5

... LETTERS continued from page 2

Macon County's Compensation Study

Dear Editor,

I believe Macon County's Commissioners need to closely analyze and thoroughly discuss the results and proposals made in Springsted's compensation and classification study before any changes are made to the county's compensation plan.

I suggest that County Commissioners obtain a "second opinion" from another consultant on classification and compensation, prior to committing to the significant increases in employee compensation proposed by the Springsted study.

Those increases could result in an annual cost estimated at between \$613,000 and \$1.13 million for taxpayers. Would those additional expenditures be appropriate when the U.S. economy could be headed for another recession this year?

Without question county employees deserve competitive compensation for their services in order to maintain a stable and productive workforce. That compensation includes both salaries and benefits that should be considered together in a compensation package. Instead, Springsted has split salaries from benefits in their salary analysis.

As well as providing county employees with competitive compensation, it is

also important to protect the interests of taxpayers, by getting the best value for taxpayers' money by not over-compensating county employees.

I am not convinced Springsted's study meets the dual goals of equity for both county employees and taxpayers.

•See LETTERS page 14



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• LAUGHING AT LIFE •

I'm gaming the system



Fred Wooldridge

cashier responded, locking her cash register. She headed for Customer Service which was mobbed with customers trying to become millionaires by buying lottery tickets. (Ha!)

After about five minutes passed, a lifetime when you're waiting in a grocery line that's not moving, I looked at my li'l missus and whispered, "No good deed goes unpunished." She smiled and whispered back, "Do you mean nice guys finish last?" We smiled at each other.

When the cashier returned to her register she informed her customer that her manager would have to go in the storeroom as there may be a few left in the locked cigarette area. We waited....nothing happened....we waited more. To our amazement, the manager returned with the cigarettes. "This is the last pack," the manager informed her. I closed my eyes and mentally repeated, "Relax, Fred, you're retired. Relax, Fred, you're retired."

Adding to our frustration, the young lady whipped out her food stamps and plunked them on the counter. The cashier scooped them up and started punching numbers on her register. We waited.....nothing happened. Looking puzzled, the cashier tried again, punching numbers even faster than I can type. We waited....still nothing.

"Just a moment, I need a manager," she said, waving her arm over her head to get the attention of Customer Service. We waited some more....no one came. The cashier locked her register and, once again, headed for Customer Service. By now I'm getting real grumpy. The guy behind me said, "No matter what line I get into, it stalls immediately."

I sympathized with him and then asked, "Can you even buy hair color and cigarettes with food stamps?"

Obviously the guy was grumpier than I because he snapped back, "What, do I look like a person who would be on food stamps?"

The li'l missus knows me well and pulled on my arm to turn me away from the smart-alecky remark. I took her subtle advice. After what seemed like an eternity, the manager arrived, took her special key and punched in a bunch of register numbers. TA DA, the register would now accept food stamps.

Wait....are you ready for this? The two objects the young lady purchased had a lesser value than the value of her food stamps so the cashier gave her the remainder in cash. I stood with my mouth open while the cashier bagged the two objects and gave her the cash. Then I waited for an apology from the food stamp recipient because it took so long. Nope! It never happened. Without making eye contact, she turned and walked over to the lottery ticket line.

After the cashier finished ringing up our order, I said, "I didn't think you could buy hair color and cigarettes with food stamps." She ignored my remark. When she handed me the receipt for my groceries, I said, "Well, did you hear my question?" The cashier smiled and said, "I didn't hear a question. You have a nice day, sir, and thank you for shopping with us." I left the store bewildered.

The next morning I decided to get on this food stamp craze. Hey, everyone's getting them. I applied for food stamps on-line. It was soooo easy. After punching in the right stuff on my computer, I received a food stamp form to fill out. Just above the form was a giant bright red notice informing applicants that giving false information on food stamp forms could result in a quarter of a million dollar fine. How funny is that? Where does your average food stamp applicant get a quarter of a million dollars to pay the fine if the person doesn't even have enough money to buy food? Circus music, please!

Anyway, I hit all the right keys and checked all the

• See WOOLDRIDGE page 9

I'm not making this up....well, maybe just exaggerated a bit. The li'l missus and I were standing in a very long South Florida grocery line with our typical two week supply of groceries in our cart. The store was packed with customers and the line was moving at a snail's pace. As we inched forward toward the cashier, I noticed a nicely dressed young lady directly behind us. She was holding one small object in her hand so I offered the young lady a spot in front of us so she could check out more quickly. (More quickly is like more better only more better is....well, more better.)

She smiled and thanked us. When it was time for the young lady to check out, she plopped a bottle of hair color on the conveyor belt. After the cashier rang that up, the young girl asked for a pack of cigarettes, a brand I'd never heard of. "I'm not sure we still carry those anymore," the



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• THE VIEW FROM HERE •

Pre-existing conditions are a problem

Pre-existing Condition Insurance Plan (PCIP) is a stop-gap measure, a product of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), intended to provide coverage for citizens who are currently uninsurable due to pre-existing conditions. The program will cease to exist on January 1, 2014 when the law requires that insurance companies provide coverage, without a premium, for those with pre-existing health conditions. That is, unless it runs out of money before then.

Last week the program stopped enrolling new members, and Health and Human Services official, Gary Cohen, told a Senate committee the PCIP has had to "alter benefits" in an effort to keep the program from running out of money before the end of the year. The program was funded with five billion and has more than 100,000 enrollees. At an average annual cost of \$32,108 per participant, and a monthly cost that peaked at over \$180,000,000 last summer, freezing enrollment and "altering benefits" seems a prudent, and necessary, move. But aren't we describing rationing?

Benefits have varied by state, and have ranged from a little more than \$4,000 to nearly \$172,000 per enrollee per year. Either some states have a disproportionate number of sick folks, or the practitioners in some states have found a way to profit massively from the program. What was that about fraud in government provided health coverage? The program is demonstrably unsustainable, even for a few years, even with five billion dollars appropriated to provide care for roughly three of every 10,000 Americans.

But things will be better in 2014 when insurance companies will no longer be permitted to "discriminate" against those with pre-existing conditions. Or will they? One may view insurance company profits as obscene, but the companies will do everything possible to maintain those profits. When they are no longer permitted to charge higher premiums, or refuse coverage, to the chronically ill,



Dr. Henry Salzarulo

Feedback is encouraged.

email:
hsalzarulo@aol.com

they will simply raise the rates for all of us. Individuals may be priced out of the market. Employers, faced with sky rocketing insurance costs, may reduce the bulk of their employees to part-time status, or opt to pay a lesser fine rather than provide more expensive health insurance coverage for their workers.

The legislation is an attempt to expand insurance coverage to millions of uninsured Americans. It may have the opposite effect. The government has mandated more universal coverage, but expects private insurance companies to pay for it. They will, in turn, pass the cost along to the rest of us. We've already seen taxes increase to cover the added cost of care. We will soon be subject to the additional burden of a not so hidden new tax, in the form of higher premiums and fewer employer funded plans.

I think the end game is this. The government throws up its hands, laments that the private sector was given an opportunity to participate, but costs proved uncontrollable, and Washington must step in and save the day. That will be the day we will see the introduction of the National Health Service. On that day we'll see fewer unnecessary procedures performed, but longer, sometimes life threatening, delays for necessary ones. It will be a day when the greedy will lose interest in medicine as a career, as will the brilliant, when the development of both expensive gadgets of marginal value, and innovative life-saving devices will slow to a trickle. It will surely be a time when care is rationed.

Last week the government acknowledged that with five billion dollars, it couldn't care for 100,000 people with pre-existing conditions. It has frozen enrollment at current levels and "altered benefits." I'm sure we should not read that as "expanded." Government-provided health care can take care of all of us. It has been proved throughout the industrialized world. But it can't take care of us the way we want to be taken of. And there is the rub.

... DEFIBS from page 3

Performing CPR on patients while standing in the back of an ambulance is a test of strength and agility on a straight, flat road but can become a horrendous feat on the county's curvy, steep roads. The Auto-Pulse machine takes the human factor out of the equation. Once the patient is strapped to the machine, it does the pumping at all the right intervals for the right amount of time and actually takes the place of an EMS crew member who can then concentrate on administering medicine.

There was some talk of partially funding the machines and phasing in the rest over time but then the questions arose: "Which ambulances get the new machines? What does that mean for patients in the backup ambulances?"

In the end, a 3 to 2 vote with Commissioners Ron Haven and Paul Higdon voting no, cinched the deal. The county agreed to finance the purchase of the 12 defibrillators through BB&T for \$374,000 at 1.57% interest for 59 months with no bank fees or pre-payment penalty and payments of \$39,029 twice a year.

Since the lifespan of the machines is 5-7 years, from this point out the county will budget for replacements so funding for all 12 at one time won't be necessary again.

• See DEFIBS page 14

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In many real estate markets, a palpable optimism is returning

Exurbia Sotheby's International Realty wishes to thank all of our friends and clients for their support in 2012. Our mission to represent clients with the best possible market tools, exceptional marketing and the finest quality agent representation have been the hallmarks of our growth. We are pleased to say it is working!

Insights on the global luxury real estate industry from the Sotheby's International Realty professionals from more than 600 offices located in 45 countries worldwide report that a palpable optimism is returning. For those on the sidelines, now is the time to consider investing in the future. Why? Because there are four phases of a real estate cycle as demonstrated over the last decade:

1. Volume and Prices rise;
2. Volume declines with Prices flat to still rising;
3. Volume and Prices decline;
4. Volume increases with Prices flat to declining.

The following MLS statistics since the October, 2008 market downturn indicate that the Highlands/Cashiers Plateau is currently in Phase Four.

Note that even though the number of total sales transactions have risen 33% since 2009, sales in the \$300,000 category and above have risen less than 10%.

Prices are directly tied to supply, and there is a five to six year inventory of homes in every price category, and some price ranges have up to a ten year inventory. However, quality properties that are priced to re-



Jody Lovell
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flect "CURRENT MARKET" prices are being snapped up quickly and, in some cases, with multiple interested parties. If you are a Buyer and have selected your favorite home, do not dawdle because in this warm winter, other Buyers are active and may come to the table.

Exurbia Sotheby's International Realty currently has 6 million dollars of transactions scheduled to close in the next three weeks. Consequently, our outlook for 2013 remains positive despite some fiscal and political cliffs on the horizon. We believe that unit volume gains will continue to improve, but prices are directly tied to supply and will remain flat until inventory starts to move at a healthy turnover rate. Successful Buyers will be those in a position to make a quick decision with cash or financing approval in place. Successful Sellers will be those with razor-sharp listing prices to attract the best Buyers in the marketplace. All told, it should be a satisfying year for the Highlands/Cashiers Plateau real estate participants.

Jody and Wood Lovell own Exurbia Sotheby's International Realty, local leaders in the real estate market for thirteen years, with two locations: one in The Old Edwards Inn complex in downtown Highlands and one at the gate of Cullasaja Club of Highlands. Jody was again the Number One Agent out of 300 on the entire MLS in 2012 in the sale of residential properties. Call them at (828) 526-4104 for your real estate needs.

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total Homes Sold	270	293	321	394
Total Sales Volume	174,045,374	157,000,618	161,924,559	188,355,272
Homes Over 300k	192	167	180	212
Homes Over 2 mil	13	11	5	1 (Sold by Exurbia Sotheby's)

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help to clean up the physicality that plagues the game.

3. Hire a 4th official. The three man crews that work today's games do the best that they can, but with the speed and athleticism of today's players, it is just too much for only three guys. Another official would allow for better control of the players.

4. Implement the Defensive 3 Second rule that the NBA currently uses. This will open up the lane as much as possible to help prevent so much contact around the basket.

While these changes aren't perfect, I believe that they would go a long way to making the game more watchable and less rugged than it has currently become.

will add some extra spacing, which will help open up the lane.

2. Give a player 7 fouls before fouling out. One of the major problems with the game today is the physical nature of play. One of the reasons for this physical nature is that referees are human and don't want to call fouls on every play. This, along with the next two will

There was an article on The Big Lead website last week talking about how many pundits were lamenting the fact that college basketball is broken.

The article cited how scoring was down, there were no dominant teams, and most of the exciting players in college basketball left after one season.

While I may not agree with the premise of the article, I do agree that there are some changes that need to be made in order to improve college basketball. Here are some of my suggestions.

1. Move the three point line back a foot...but not for the reason you might think. The three point shot is a critical part of the game and it is here to stay. However, moving the line back a bit

• HS SPORTS •

Highlanders clinch second straight Conference Championship

Friday night, the Highlander boys basketball team captured the first back-to-back championship in recent memory with a 51-42 victory over the Blue Ridge Bobcats.

The Highlanders actually trailed 11-10 at the end of the first quarter, but used a 1-3-1 zone trap to spark a 10-2 run and give the Highlanders a lead that they would never relinquish.

The Highlander offense struggled mightily shooting the ball, going 0-13 from the three-point line and shooting just 50% from the FT line on the evening.

Despite the shooting woes, the Highlanders used a strong defensive effort to hold the Bobcats at bay throughout the second half and send the Blue Ridge crowd home unhappy.

Senior Taylor Osteen led the Highlanders with 14 points, and Tyler Munger added 13 for the Highlanders.

Highlands will host a home NCHSAA playoff game on Monday February 25th, with the time and opponent yet to be determined.

The victory at Blue Ridge ensured that the Highlanders will be the #1 seed from the LSMC heading into the State Playoffs.

Please help Highlands compete in the playoffs by coming out to Highlands School Monday evening and give the Highlanders a great home court advantage.

Lady Highlanders outlast Blue Ridge

The Highlands Lady Highlanders rolled into Cashiers on Friday night looking to clinch a share of second place in the Little Smoky Mountain Conference before heading into the conference tournament.

• See HS SPORTS page 8



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• HIGHLANDS AREA UPCOMING EVENTS •

Ongoing

• Registration is now open for the 2013 summer Nature Day Camps at the Highlands Nature Center. Five different camps are being offered: "WOW! – a World of Wonder" (ages 4-6), "Amazing Animals" (ages 7-10), "NatureWorks" (ages 8-11), "Moun-

tain Explorers" (ages 10-13), and "Junior Ecologists" (ages 11-14). Most camps are offered more than once during the summer, and sessions run from Tuesday to Friday each week. For complete schedules, costs, and other information, please call 828-526-2623 or visit the summer camps webpage at

www.highlandsbiological.org.

Mon., Wed., Fri.

• Heart Healthy Exercise Class at the Rec Park. 8:30-9:30 a.m. \$20/month.

• Zumba at the Rec Park, 9:05a-10a. \$5 per class. First class free.

First Monday

• Highlands-Cashiers Hospital Auxiliary meets the first Monday of the month at 10 am. Everyone is welcome. For more information call Volunteer Services at 526-1376

Mondays

• Mountain View Group of Alcoholics Anonymous will be held in the Faith and Fellowship Center of First Presbyterian Church. Enter via the entrance on 5th St. and proceed a few steps down to the library.

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 Presbyterian Church at Fifth and Main streets.

Wednesdays

• The Highlands Mountaintop Rotary

meets at 7:30 a.m. in the dining room at the H-C 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.

• Mah Jong games will be held, open to the public, at the Albert Carlton Cashiers-Community Library at 1 p.m.

3rd Wednesday

• Movies at the Hudson Library. Recently released movies at 2 p.m. Free including popcorn. Bring your own soft drinks. 828-526-3031 for movie information.

1st Wednesday

• Movies at the Hudson Library. Children/Family movies at 3:30 p.m. Free including popcorn. Bring your own soft drinks. 828-526-3031 for movie information. **Wednesdays & Fridays**

• Open AA meeting at noon at the Pres-

byterian Church at Fifth and Main streets.

Thursdays, Fri., Sat., Sun.

• Live music at Altitudes at Skyline Lodge, 470 Skyline Lodge Road off Flat Mountain Road. Call 526-2121.

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. Call Anne Doggett at 526 8009.

• Free dinner at the Cashiers Community Center from 5-7 p.m. Mostly organic, healthy food. Donations accepted. Call 743-5706 for more information. Volunteers needed!

Second Thursdays

• The regular meeting of Highlands Chapter #284, Order of The Eastern Star is held at 7:30 p.m..

Saturdays

• At Mountain Fresh Grocery, free wine tastings from 2-4 p.m.

• The Art Room, 45 East Main St. in Franklin is having free Make & Take Classes from 10am to 12:30. Come make a Card...Ages 15 and up please! Call Dianne 828-349-3777 or Robin 828-421-9891.

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 invite

Thursday, Feb 21

• Healthy Heart Symposium at the Jane Woodruff Clinic, Level One, Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Program includes Heart Risk Screening, Lunch and Learn educational talk with Dr. Julie A. Farrow entitled "Women and Heart Health," and an overview of the latest information on prevention, detection and treatment of heart disease provided by HCH Staff and Mission Heart. 11:30am – 2pm. Reservations required. Call Callie Calloway at 526-1313.

• Mary Ann Lalemand, Consumer and Family Advisor with Smoky Mountain Center will discuss Mental Health Services they offer and how to access them at 7 p.m. at 14 W Palmer Street in Franklin.

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

Monday, Feb. 25

• The North Jackson County Republican Monthly Meeting at 6:30 pm at Ryan's in Sylva. Come early to eat. The meeting will start promptly at 6:30 pm.

Tuesday, Feb. 26

• South Jackson County Republicans will meet at 6:30 PM in the new Cashiers-Glenville Community Recreation Center in Cashiers.

• Highlands Dialogue: Our Topic Will

... HS SPORTS continued from page 7



Highlands' Rebeka Parks trying to rebound at the Blue Ridge game. Highlands Boys and Girls won. See more on page 7. Photo by Lisa Osteen.

The Lady Highlanders lost at home to Blue Ridge before Christmas, but showed the Lady Bobcats just how much they have improved with an 11-2 run to start the game. Highlands used both man to man and a morphing zone to confuse the Lady Bobcats and hold their offense in check. Emily Shuler was the focal point of the offense for Highlands early, but foul trouble forced her to the bench and allowed the Lady Bobcats to creep back to 16-10 at the half.

In the second half, the Lady

Bobcats made a run to cut the Highlands lead to just two points, but the Lady Highlanders responded with a critical shooting stretch. The run began with FT's from Whitney Billingsley, continued with a three pointer from Ashlee Maitland, jumpers from Ann Marie Crowe and Kirstyn Lamb and was finished off by free throws from Shuler and Crowe. Highlands matched the Lady Bobcat total of 18 in the fourth quarter and came away with a 42-32 victory.

... REPAIRS continued from page 1

ers direct instruction is almost all the time. Consequently, it is hot in my room a lot of the time."

Jennifer Forrester, a parent of three students at Highlands School said she volunteers in her son's kindergarten class across the hall from Coppage but said the problems are the same.

In addition, Forrester said new windows and HVAC would mean tremendous energy savings – an issue she knows the school board is keeping abreast of.

Commissioner Ronnie Beale said the renovations to the elementary wing represent one of the last parts of the school master plan set up years ago by the county commission.

"This brings Highlands School up to where the rest of the schools are and means all the schools have been touched which enables our students to have education in a quality place," he said.

Highlands School is also on the Capital Outlay wish list for 2013-'14 which includes the replacement of the old gym roof estimated to cost \$29,035.

Meanwhile, at the January school board meeting "awards" were given to schools which have decreased utility usage.

For Dec. 2012-Jan 2013, the Gold award went to Union Academy which was down 14%, the Silver award went to Iotla Valley which was down 11%, and the Bronze award went to Cartoogechaye which was down 9%.

The Central office was up .25%; East Franklin Elementary was down 2%, Franklin High School was up 6%, Macon Middle School and South Macon Elementary were down 4%, Nantahala was up .01%, and Highlands School was up 7%. Countywide utility bills were up 1.6% – \$57,612 for January vs. \$56,654 for December.

The new Mountain View Intermediate School which should be one of the most energy efficient schools in the system was up 83%, which has board members alarmed.

"I am waiting for this month's bill to see if that last one was a result of some months of under billing," said Duncan. "It is highly unusual and we are looking at it."

– **Kim Lewicki**

right boxes on the form. I'm unemployed and have no wages. I was careful not to lie. So I'm sitting here waiting for my stamps to arrive. If by some weird chance

I get them, I'll mail them to our president with an explanation of how much I don't deserve food stamps. For certain, I won't buy hair color or cigarettes cause' I love

my all white hair and I don't smoke. Maybe I'll buy bullets?

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tiative and moral greatness no longer matter. Get used to it.

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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

President's Day

By Pastor Dan Robinson
Highlands Central Baptist Church

Increasingly, I am struck with the humanism and hedonism alive and well in our culture. This set of twins do seem to be joined at the hip with no intention or desire to be separated.

Most simply stated: Humanism is all about me. Hedonism is all about what pleasures me.

These cancerous philosophies seem magnified to me just now. Why? Because this is the week we celebrate President's Day. The connection? Well, let's think for a moment about George Washington.

On June 29, 1788, he sent a letter to General Benjamin Lincoln, his deputy in the war who had accepted British General Cornwallis' sword at the surrender at Yorktown: "No country upon earth ever had it more in its power to attain these blessings...much to be regretted indeed would it be, were we to neglect the news and depart from the road which providence has pointed us to so plainly. I cannot believe it will ever come to pass. The Great Governor of the Universe has led us too long and too far to forsake us in the midst of it. We may now and then get bewildered, but I hope and trust that there is good sense and virtue enough left to recover the right path."

Clearly in this letter humility trumps hedonism and humanism.

What about Lincoln? In September of 1862, in the darkest moment of the War after losing the Second Battle of Bull Run, Lincoln wrote his Meditation on the Divine Will:

"The will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be wrong. God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time. In the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party -- and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are of the best adaptation to effect His purpose.

I am almost ready to say this is probably true -- that God wills this contest and wills that it shall not end yet. By his mere quiet power, on the minds of the now contestants, He could have either saved or destroyed the Union without a human contest. Yet the contest began. And having begun He could give the final victory to either side any day. Yet the contest proceeds."

Again, humility and absolute dependence on a Holy God. So, my point in all this?

President's Day (traditionally honoring Washington and Lincoln) is now about retailers and consumers. President's Day sales are endless. I hope you find a good bargain. I hope you save money. There's nothing wrong with that. But let's remind ourselves that we (Americans) stand on the shoulders of men who believed this nation is an incomparable gift and entrustment.

These Presidents we honor submitted to the God they believed responsible for this great nation, the true and only God. I can't think of anything better for us as a nation to continue doing.

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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Wednesday: Prayer Service, 6:30 p.

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Wed: Supper; 6; 7:15 - children, youth, & adults studies; 6:15 -
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... UTILITIES continued from page 1

to get their accounts paid to keep it from being cut off."

He said the town's system for keeping up with utility bills and customers is broken, and the more staff delves into it, the more "broken" parts it's finding.

"The system works in terms of billing, but we are finding locations that are getting free water and free utilities. For instance, some locations don't have meters and we don't know why."

He said the matter is compounded because there are a number of people who are renting retail space but the actual meter isn't in their name, so in some cases the town can't cut the offender off because others in the same building are paying," he said. "We need to address some of these things and we can't fix them overnight. Some people won't be happy, because they will eventually be responsible for their own utility bill."

Mayor David Wilkes said everyone should have their own meter.

"In some cases there is one meter but we are sending out five bills which means five minimums which effects the water bills," he said. "Then we have cases where there is one meter and one bill that goes to the landlord who divvies it up. There are a lot of issues."

Beginning with the next utility bill, customers will see a website and pin number/password printed on the card which they can use to pay their utility bills on-line.

Though it's visible to all who see the card at the post office, it's a pin number that can only be used to pay the utility bill.

Frye said since the utility bills are locally distributed by the post office – that is they aren't first sent to Asheville for distribution – only the local postal service employees see the cards, anyway.

The bad news? It will cost customers an extra 4% to pay bills on line – this on top of the recent 25% rate hike.

According to Matt Shuler, GIS/IT director for the town, currently the town pays gateway and merchant fees which are percentage-based.

He said if the town had 500-1,000 customers who paid on-line, the town could lower the fees.

However, he said it's illegal for the town to discount any charge.

"What this means is that if the town charges a flat rate, say \$3, for people with a small bill that would cover them, but if someone with a \$1,000 bill pays online, it will not cover them, so the town would have in essence discounted their utility bill. That is what is

illegal," he said.

Shuler said the plan is to start with the 4% fee and when usage of on-line pay increases, the town can lower the fee.

"It is set up to break even, and we will have to adjust that percentage in the fee schedule to keep it break even," he said.

Most businesses charge a flat rate, and increases in sales offset the possible loss in profit. But that is not the case with the town.

"We will not receive any additional income by having credit cards. This is why many towns still do not take them," he said.

Shuler said he hopes the town can soon offer a set rate. "We are looking at implementing fixed-rate billing with a true-up at the end of the year. Our software can do it. It is not quite ready to go yet, but will be soon."

Another option is to have the utility bills automatically drafted from bank accounts which means no merchant fees on the town's end and no extra expense for customers.

Meanwhile, Kevin O'Donnell with Nova Energy Consultants – the town's Duke liaison – has suggested numerous energy saving options for the town and its residential and commercial customers. He said Energy Efficiency (EE) programs reduce en-

ergy consumption around the clock.

Incentives include rebates for using ENERGY STAR appliances, high SEER AC units, attic insulation, duct sealing, HVAC tuneups, water heater wraps, the use of compact fluorescent bulbs, low-flow shower heads, faucet aerators, etc.

Another program called Demand Side Management (DSM) is where customers give Duke – Highlands' wholesale provider – the ability to interrupt their HVAC unit, the hot water heater and

some electric appliances that may be running during Duke's peak period. In this program customers would get \$100 upfront and \$100 after 12 months.

However, since it would cost the town \$15,000 for a transmitter at the substation and then \$400 for each individual load control switch, the town would get the incentive money and then decide how much to send on to the customers once it makes back its initial outlay.

– Kim Lewicki

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

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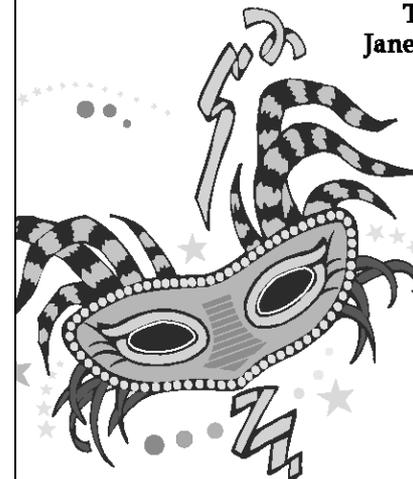
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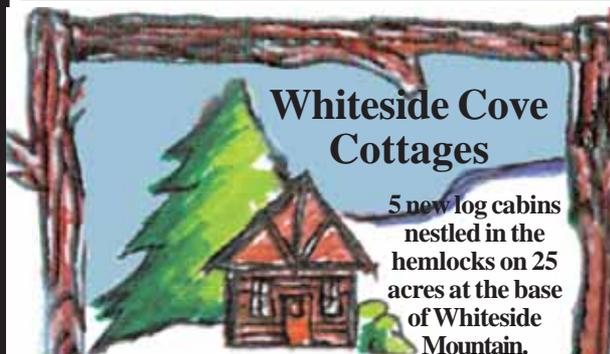
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HCP'S production of 'Social Security' opens this week



Marsha Shmalo and Stuart Armor with Nancy Gaddy in "Social Security" opening Thursday, Feb. 21 at the Performing Arts Center on Chestnut Street.

Are you old enough for Social Security? Whether you are or not, you'll find plenty of humor in "Social Security," the play, as two sisters and their husbands face the dilemma of dealing with the daughters' eccentric and opinionated widowed mother.

This timeless comedy was a Broadway hit in the '80s and has been making audiences laugh ever since in regional and community theaters.

The Highlands Cashiers Players now take its turn presenting this funny play, with opening night on February 21, 7:30 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center in Highlands and a catered reception for audience, cast, and production team following the performance.

Director Mary Adair Leslie has cast five of HCP's talented and experienced actors and also a talented and experienced newcomer, Nancy Gaddy, who plays the pivotal role of Sophie Greengrass, the archetypical Jewish mother. Jennifer Royce and Marsha Shmalo play Sophie's beleaguered daughters; Stuart Armor and Lance Trudel, their long-suffering husbands; with Dean Zuch in the role of an elderly artist whose art works are handled by one of the couples.

Is someone old enough for Social Security too old for romance? Come see for yourself.

You'll chuckle, laugh out loud and enjoy the fun of HCP's production of this popular comedy which runs Thursday through Sunday, February 21-24, and Friday through Sunday, March 1-3. Weekday and Saturday performances start at 7:30 p.m., Sunday matinees, at 2:30 p.m.

The HCP box office is located at the Performing Arts Center, 507 Chestnut Street in Highlands. Box office hours, Monday through Saturday, are 10 a.m. till 4 p.m., and on Sunday at 1:30 p.m. On evening performance days, the box office opens at 6:30 p.m. Call for reservations at 526-8084.

... CLASSIFIEDS from page 13

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... LETTERS continued from page 3

I believe a major flaw of the study was the poor selection of the "market" used for establishing a new pay scale. Three of the 10 North Carolina counties/cities used in the "market" are over 200 miles away. Meanwhile local towns, nearby counties, and local private sector companies were ignored.

In Springsted studies for Carroll County, Virginia in 2010, and Amherst County, Virginia in 2009, local towns, private industry, and even counties in adjoining states, were included in the salary "markets."

I am not a compensation consultant, just a concerned county taxpayer. However, my "amateur" analysis of independently obtained data shows some salary adjustments may be appropriate for county employees, but does not indicate the need for the massive overhaul Springsted recommends. Thus my suggestion for a "second opinion" from professionals.

The announcement by Springsted that 55% of employees are paid below the minimum salary rate of the proposed pay grade schedule has certainly put Macon County Commissioners in a difficult position.

Most county employees are now wondering if they are among the 55% that are being underpaid based solely on Springsted's study.

I hope County Commissioners take the time necessary to assure themselves the proposed increase in the county's payroll is proper.

**Vic Drummond
Franklin**

... REC PARK from page 1

\$20,000 if it's going to open the pool this year. Mayor David Wilkes suggested asking the county commission to help fund repairs.

Norris has suggested moving the pool complex to where the green garage is now – left of the driveway entering the complex above the tennis court.

"My suggestion would be to relocate the pool for two reasons: first, so the lower side of the pool is underground and not exposed as it is today and second, the existing pool could remain in operation while the new one is constructed.

In addition, utility lines are nearby, which isn't the case with other locations considered on the Rec Park property.

"We are hoping the county commission will make good on its commitment to fund a portion of this," said Town Manager Bob Frye.

The total cost of the new complex including a bath house and the demolition of the garage is estimated at \$419,120.

The pool would be a Junior Olympic Pool (42 ft. by 75 ft., 3 1/2 ft. to 8 ft. in depth) and would include a Zero Entry Wading Pool and decking.

Over the years, there has been talk of nixing the pool all together, but Frye said under the LWCF grant stipulations of the 1970s, which preceded today's PARTFF program, the town must always provide a pool as part of its outdoor recreation and if it doesn't it must refund the value of the complex at today's rates. In the 1970s the town got \$30,000 of LWCF grant money.

"This is not easy to walk away from," said Frye. "We would have to write a check for what the complex is valued at today."

In addition to a new pool, other repairs are needed at the Rec Park, namely replacement of the HVAC system and all exterior doors which are in such disrepair they are hard to lock. These repairs are estimated to cost \$200,000.

So if the county agrees to split the cost of the new pool, the town needs to come up with a little over \$400,000 in the FY 2013-'14 budget year for Rec Park upgrades.

Commissioner Amy Patterson said the county should be willing to help out because Highlands provides recreation for this end of the county and the \$500,000 the county traditionally gives Highlands for recreation needs doesn't include capital improvements.

There are numerous other items on the Rec Park's capital improvement wish list which Manager Frye said should be budgeted for over a 3-5 year plan.

– **Kim Lewicki**

... DEFIBS from page 5

Part of the package, included trading in the county's 17 old defibrillators – some which are 10-12 years old and were used when they were acquired – knocking \$34,008 off the bottom line.

EMS crew chiefs said having the monitor/defibrillators means having one machine on scene that multi-tasks rather than having to cart four pieces of equipment wherever they go. "This one box has everything," they said.

Chairman Kevin Corbin said monetarily he would have preferred to phase them in, but he sees the need "especially if you are having a heart attack."

– **Kim Lewicki**

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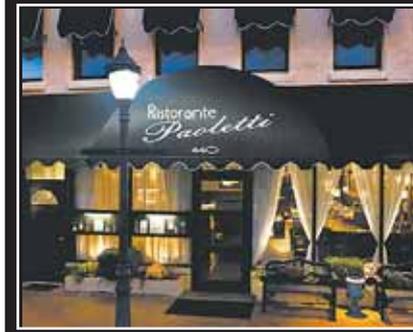
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