

Highlands Newspaper

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Thursday, Jan. 24, 2013

Reval work has begun for 2015 implementation

At the Mid-Year Review meeting Saturday with Macon County Commissioners, Tax Administrator Richard Lightner set the timer for the upcoming reval – the two-year countdown has begun.

“It’s good that we delayed the

reval because verified sales are up 25% which means our criteria is good and we now have good comparables,” he said.

At the last reval in 2007, Macon County’s tax valorem was \$9.3 billion. Lightner said it won’t be

higher than that in 2015, in fact it’s likely to go down by at least 25%.

In 1975, it became law that revals had to reflect 100% market value so when the recession hit, the county put off revals until the

market rebounded. A reval can be put off for eight years max. Short sales and foreclosures don’t meet the criteria for revaluation so they don’t play into the equation.

Commissioners voted to de-

• See REVAL page 10

Town/County ‘talking’ about Highlands Pool

At the Macon County Mid-Year Review meeting held Saturday, Jan. 19 at the SCC campus on Siler Road commissioners and the public learned what the county has accomplished for 2012-’13 and what it is considering accomplishing for 2013-’14.

In the midst of discussing numerous topics spanning the county’s fiscal health, NCACC Legislative goals, redistricting, the upcoming tax valuation, EMS and IT needs, Capital Improvement Projects, Employee Classification and Compensation Plans, Highlands came up.

Recently, County Commissioner Jim Tate and County Manager Jack Horton met with Highlands Commissioner Brian Stiehler and Town Manager Bob Frye to discuss the state of the pool at the Highlands Rec Park.

The county has committed and is in the midst of completely refurbishing the Franklin Recreation park’s pool and pool house and while those negotiations were in the works, talk about tak-

ing care of Highlands’ pool emerged.

“The county is very interested in upgrading our current recreation facilities which is proven by the current large capital investment that is being made to completely re-do the Macon County pool in Franklin as well as the potential purchase and addition of the Parker/Meadows property for a baseball/softball complex,” said Commissioner Jim Tate. “As part of this deal, there has been consensus on the Macon County Board of Commissioners to help Highlands upgrade its pool, as well.”

Exactly what will be done is still up in the air – both it and the pool house could be repaired or a new pool complex could be constructed.

“The county with the assistance of Highlands Recreation Director Lester Norris has been investigating the costs associated with the repairs to the Highlands pool, but they are potentially so extensive, that it might be better to completely re-build the pool versus putting a “band-aid” on it,” said Tate.

Since the pool is on town property and not county property, the county can’t make any decisions regarding this alone.

“We have asked the town to

• See POOL page 7



Jeremy Keener was named “Fireman of the Year” at Saturday’s annual Fire & Rescue Awards Dinner at the Community Building. He is pictured with Fire Chief Ryan Gearhart. Keener and Roger L. Wilson were also given “Perfect Attendance” awards for 2012. See more photos on page 14.

Photo by Jim Lewicki

Dept. salutes Keener; says good-bye to Manley

At Saturday night’s annual awards dinner, Highlands Fire & Rescue honored their own.

Jeremy Keener was named Outstanding Fireman of the Year and retiring chief James “Popcorn” Manley was honored with the Fire Axe award for being chief for 10 ½ years and a watch and

plaque for 33 years of volunteer service. Manley was also presented a plaque from the town by Mayor Pro Temp and department volunteer Eric Pierson.

In a heart-felt presentation, Administrative Assistant and lifelong member of the department,

• See DEPT. page 11

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Redistricting topic at Sat. meeting

This past election cycle, Highlands citizens became alarmed when they learned Republican Steve Higdon of Ellijay could become their representative at the commission board table.

That and other aspects of Macon County’s voting districts spurred discussion about redistricting.

There are three districts in Macon County – District 1 is the Highlands district, District 2 is the Franklin district and District 3 is the Nantahala district.

District 1 includes Highlands, Flats (Scaly Mountain), Ellijay and Sugarfork.

Sugarfork extends past the Highlands nine-mile Fire District down Buck Creek Road and crosses over to encompass an area south of the Cullasja River along US 64 west. Sugarfork’s polling place is the old school house at Peek’s Creek Road.

Ellijay runs from behind the old Walmart and includes the old Cullasja Elementary School on US 64 west up north and includes the south side of the Cullasja River.

At Saturday’s commission meeting, Commissioner Jim Tate asked that the board discuss redistricting due to the geographic boundaries and term limits.

• See PARK page 7

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• LETTERS •

Forbearance for angry old white men

Dear Editor,

The following letter is written in response to Fred Wooldridge's column in the December 27/Jan. 3 edition of Highlands Newspaper, but is not intended as a personal attack against anyone.

These questions are worthy of periodic introspection for individuals and for society as a whole in order to properly understand those disgraceful elements of American history, when white people of the far right political persuasion, either marginalized or enslaved all minority groups and races. Not to do so, leaves the ground tilled and fertile for the reoccurrence of the same sorts of injustice and inequality.

As far-right conservatism has again consolidated its power base primarily in the old confederate south, we have seen a resurgence of disdain, by some in this movement, towards the rights and dignity of both women and working class people of all races, usually resulting in meaningful income and economic disparity along the same demographic lines. Similar themes of intolerance seem to be continually regurgitated, repackaged, and then trotted out as something new by the far right winged ideology throughout American history. Perhaps it's always been about who does the work, at what price, and who ultimately pays that price.

Of all the groups out there who might be collectively angry, including women, Hispanics, the LGBT community, young Americans, disenfranchised Americans, native Americans, Asian Americans, and African Americans, to name but a few, it would seem that old white men would have the least to complain and be angry about.

If the right questions are asked by the angered, then answered truthfully with a minimal amount of humanity, there would be no need to be angry or to hide.

It is still perfectly OK, with no apologies necessary, to be an old white man and living here in Highlands with its unique qualities and special small town appeal, enjoying residual or inherited privileges. But do yourself and others a favor and lose the anger and resentment.

Highlands is a welcoming communi-

ty for all that wish to contribute to its ideals of neighborly community inclusion and goodwill, and should not be contemplated as a hideout for intellectual and moral laziness, even if cleverly disguised or cynically construed as humor or satire.

Charlie Dasher
Highlands

Speaking of grinder pumps in distasteful

Dear Editor,

Just a short comment about Fred Wooldridge's column in the Jan. 10 edition, "I would kill for a grinder pump."

Now that we have finally lived through the anguish of the Swanson Years we are facing the Fred Complex.

Something is wrong. Fred was begin-

ning to get crazy and real nasty polically about four months prior to Swanson leaving.

I have been watching the comments each week, and speaking here and there to acquaintances. All agree, Fred just keeps going. Why, my wife of 53 year would ask.

"What is in the male gene that creates a desire to be vulgar, and base, and bathroom oriented?" This is school yard behavior, and juvenile and needs adult supervision.

It should come to an end!

Westley Anthony Jacomino, Jr.
Franklin

Do your homework

Dear Editor,

Since I wrote my letter concerning Rep. Meadows "NO" vote for the increase

in the funding for the flood insurance bill (H.R. 14), a subsequent writer referred to "pork" in the bill as the reason for Meadows' vote. I cannot allow this misinformation to go unchallenged and corrected. Here, in its entirety, is the bill that Meadows voted on:

"SECTION 1. TEMPORARY INCREASE IN BORROWING AUTHORITY FOR NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM.

(a) Section 1309(a) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4016(a)) is amended by striking '\$20,725,000,000' and inserting '\$30,425,000,000'.

(b) The amount provided by this section is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 403(a) of S. Con. Res. 13 (111th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2010, and as an emergency pursuant to section 4(g) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (2 U.S.C. 933(g))."

Do the math.

This bill authorized an additional amount of \$9.7 billion to cover flood insurance claims only. The writer claims that Meadows voted no because of \$23.8 billion of pork in the bill. What?! \$23.8 billion in \$9.7 billion is impossible! The writer obviously did not bother to read and understand the bill before responding to my letter which ran Jan. 10th.

I do not support spending any money for pork, from either party. Additionally, I do not support any amendment to a bill that is not germane to that bill. But, get it straight: There was NO pork in this bill and Meadows did not fulfill the responsibility of his office!

Jim Hartje
Otto, NC

To Fred Wooldridge, 'The Voltaire of Highlands'

Dear Editor,
Fred's letter in the January 17th edition certainly edified us literary idiots and milk toast thinkers on the subtle nature of satire.

Unfortunately, all the hidden meanings that you have infused in his writing over the years has gone right over my little pea brain head.

Oh! oh, did I just write satire?

Patrick Taylor
Highlands Resident

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.

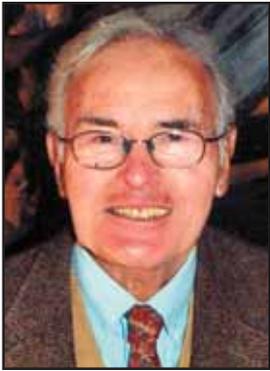
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• OBITUARIES •

Overton "Tony" Chambers II



Overton "Tony" Chambers II, 81, of Highlands, NC, died Saturday, January 19, 2013 at his home on Tartan Ridge after a long battle with cancer.

Tony was born July 14, 1931 in Chicago, IL to Overton and Dayis Deitrich Chambers. He was predeceased by his sister, Jan Chmar (Col. Paul Chmar) of Highlands.

Tony first came to Highlands in 1936 where he spent his summers. During that time, Tony stayed at Tricemont Terrace until his family's home was completed on Buck Creek Road. As a teenager, he met many people that became life-long friends - one of whom also became his wife. Tony married Isabel Hall June 15, 1951 and they shared many loves together - travel, music, friends, family and each other.

Tony attended Evanston High School, and graduated from Lawrenceville Preparatory School. He then went to Dartmouth College and graduated with a BA in English. While in Dartmouth, he was a member of the Zeta Psi Fraternity, sang in the Glee Club, and was a member of the Dartmouth Outing Club.

After graduation, Tony returned to Highlands. He was a self taught blacksmith and many homes in Highlands have railings, fire place screens and tables of wrought iron made with his hands. He was a member of the Southern Highlands Handicraft Guild. Also during this time, he taught at Tamassee School in Salem, SC.

Tony worked at Life of Georgia in Atlanta from 1957-1971 in the corporate office and became a Life Fellow. While in Atlanta he attended St. Martin in the Fields Episcopal Church. He was a Boy Scout leader and was the father and grandfather of four Eagle Scouts. He was instrumental in bringing his Scout troop to Highlands to "Camp Buck Creek" so he could share his love of Highlands with others.

He moved back to Highlands in 1971 to work at Tudor N. Hall & Associates and Village

Service. He worked as a real estate agent and insurance salesman. He later purchased the real estate division of the business and became owner and President of The Chambers Agency, REALTORS.

Tony was a member of The Church of the Incarnation in Highlands, NC where he served as a Senior Warden, and multiple times as Vestry member, Lay reader, Chalice Assistant and former choir member.

Tony was a former member of the Jaycees of Highlands. He was a member and past President of the Highlands-Cashiers Board of REALTORS and served on multiple committees. He was a member, past president and Paul Harris Fellow of the Highlands Rotary Club. Together with his wife, Isabel he received the Robert DuPree Award from the Highlands Chamber of Commerce in honor of their continuing support of Highlands.

Tony was a member of the Highlands Writer's Group and the Blue Ridge Writer's Group. He had written and published two novels, *The Inheritance* and *Lost & Found*. He also penned *Remembering Highlands*, a book of short stories told by his wife Isabel Hall Chambers about growing up in Highlands.

Tony traveled extensively, and enjoyed camping, hiking, beach trips, skiing, skeet shooting, dancing and having the occasional hootenanny with friends and family. He also enjoyed researching genealogy and reading. He loved all kinds of music, and played the accordion, mandolin, and bagpipes. He was a piper and member of the Highlands Pipes and Drums. Tony loved Highlands and its local people. He enjoyed sharing his love of the area, and wanted others to experience it the same way.

Tony is survived by his wife, Isabel Hall Chambers, three sons - Overton Tucker (Jeanne), Thomas Tudor (Vickie) and Timothy Gilbert (Karen) all of Highlands. He left nine grandchildren: Spencer Chambers (Mandy), Royce Chambers, Sam Chambers (Jessica), Adam Chambers, Kasey Chambers, Amanda Chambers, Bessie Chambers, Erin Britt (Travis), and Susan Floyd. Five great grandchildren, and many nieces, nephews and a lifelong list of friends also survive.

In lieu of flowers, it has been requested that donations be sent to The Church of the Incarnation Bell Endowment Fund, The Highlands Historical Society or the charity of your choice.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home was in charge of the funeral services held Wed., January 23, 2013 at the Highlands Church of the Incarnation.

Online condolences may be made at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com

Lillian "Pete" McCall

Lillian "Pete" McCall, age 90 of Highlands, NC, died Sunday, January 20, 2013. She was born in Oconee County, SC, the daughter of the late Fred and Annie Sisk Chapman. She was married to Bill McCall, who died October 16, 1986.



She retired from People's Department Store as a salesperson. She was a loving mother, grandmother and great-grandmother and she loved to crochet and quilt and volunteered at Highlands High School lunch room. She was a member of Highlands First Baptist Church where she worked in the nursery for several years.

Mrs. McCall is survived by two daughters, Frieda Bennett and Mary Jane McCall both of Highlands; five grandchildren, Pam Bennett, Keri Downing, Nicolaus McCall, Amy McCall and Quinton Wood and one great-grandchild, Tyler Downing. In addition to her parents and husband, she was preceded in death by a son, Mike McCall and a sister, Vallie Jester.

Funeral service were held Wednesday, January 23, 2013 at Highlands First Baptist Church

with Dr. Mark Ford officiating. Burial was in Highlands Memorial Park.

Memorial donations may be made to Four Seasons Hospice, 171 Hospital Drive, Highlands, NC 28741 or Tamassee DAR, PO Box 8, Tamassee, SC 29686.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements. Online condolences may be made at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.



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• LOOKING AT LIFE •

The greatest generation...the winter of 1945 (Part 2)

(It's the winter of 1945. World War 2 has just ended. I am nine years old and live in the Highlands area of Louisville, KY. My parents own and operate a mom and pop restaurant in a working class neighborhood. My best friend is my dog, Frisky, a mutt terrier mix.)

As usual, my parents' alarm went off just before 5 AM. When you owned and operated a restaurant in a working class neighborhood, the OPEN neon sign had better be flashing by 7 AM. The restaurant had a reputation for quick meals long before fast food ever became popular. It was called The Nook and guaranteed a worker could walk in the front door, sit down, order, be served, eat fast, pay the bill and be out in 30 minutes or less.

As my parents walked out the door of our home each morning, they would wake me, making sure I was standing tall and wide awake before leaving. After I brushed my teeth and combed my hair, I hurriedly put on my school uniform

and prepared for work. I waited tables at our restaurant each morning until it was time for school.

For Black folk....or Negro folk as most people called African Americans back then, things were much different. They received even faster food service through a back window off the kitchen. All food for these folks was "to go." Business was always brisk.

Lucinda, our head cook and my favorite person ever, was responsible for getting orders out the back window. She always plopped an extra heap of hominy grits in breakfast orders for the regulars. We called them "the back window people."

Cherokee Laundry, directly across the street from The Nook, employed more than 100 people of color and most workers ate inexpensive food from our restaurant. They received a lot of food for little money. Unfortunately, these workers were not even allowed to walk into the restaurant, even to use the pay phone or the bathroom. If persons of color were seen inside our store for any reason it would have destroyed our business. It's just how things were right after the war.

The filthy shirt from Frisky's friendly attack in my classroom yesterday sat on a nearby chair, still waiting to be washed. I grabbed my apron, my backpack containing books, a yo-yo that could hesitate and a worn out baseball that fit perfectly in a side pocket. I pulled on my Navy pea coat and rubber boots and prepared for another day of school. Just before leaving, I raised the shade and looked out my bedroom window. I couldn't believe my eyes. It must have snowed hard all night as the snow was at least a foot deep, with 3-foot drifts against the walls of Saint Bridget's Church across the street, and it was still snowing large wet flakes.

Adrenaline filled my body. I called to Frisky, "Let's go, boy." Leaving through the kitchen, we hurriedly ran down the three wooden steps and pranced into the deep snow.



Fred Wooldridge and Frisky

Frisky was impervious to cold weather and snow. His legs were so short he had to bunny hop to his favorite spot to attend to morning duties. He was so weird looking. "Are you a bunny?" I called to him, laughing.

When I tried to leave through our side gate, the snow was so deep I couldn't get it open. I looked at Frisky, tail wagging and patiently waiting for the gate to open. It was decision time. Do I go back through the house and let Frisky trash the floor with his wet, dirty feet or do I pick him up and dirty my coat and pants? Either way I would be punished. I still hadn't received punishment for the shirt Frisky dirtied yesterday in my classroom.

I pondered a moment and then remembered a trick I learned from our veterinarian. I grabbed Frisky by the loose skin behind his neck with one hand and grabbed his skin back toward his hind quarters and lifted him, careful not to let his body touch my clothes. He was so funny looking, hanging there in that position. I leaned forward and dropped him over the fence. He fell unharmed in the soft snow. I tossed my backpack over and easily hopped the fence.

Directly across the street from my home on Hepburn Ave. was Saint Bridget's School I attended each day. It sat directly behind the church. Both buildings looked cold and gray. The falling snow and snow drifts gave the grounds an eerie look resembling a haunted house. I knew there would probably be no school today.

Hepburn Ave. was one of the oldest streets in the Highlands area of Louisville, KY. Posts with two steel rings attached at the top of each one were spaced evenly down the street as far as the eye could see, left over from the horse and buggy days.

Actually, Oscar Ewing Milk Company still had one horse-drawn truck that traveled Hepburn Ave. The horse knew

•See WOOLDRIDGE page 9



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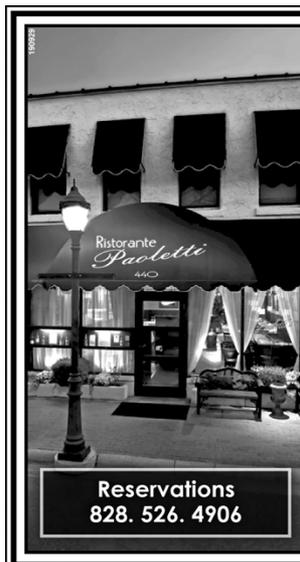
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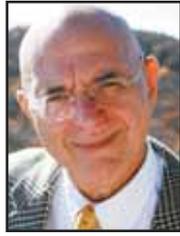


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• THE VIEW FROM HERE •

The ups and downs of dieting



Dr. Henry Salzarulo

Feedback is encouraged.
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trying to will my 48-inch body into a 44-inch uniform. I don't know why none of my commanding officers ever mentioned it.

I've been doing pretty well for several years. I've reduced the wild swings from 70 or 80 pounds to 20 or 25. At every valley, I think I've finally got the hang of it. I won't tell you my exact weight, but I do really well right now. Even when I put in my real height, my BMI is in the healthy range.

I owe my success to regu-

lar exercise and strict adherence to my personal interpretation of the Atkins Diet. Thank you Dr. Atkins. In case you don't know, there is a line of low carb diet food called Atkins. I have one for breakfast, and frequently for lunch. They're pretty amazing. One tastes almost exactly like a Mounds bar. If they just used a little more salt in another one, they could make you think you were eating a slightly stale Payday. The Reese's tastes like candle wax mixed with saw dust, but the brownie rocks. There are some I haven't tried, like the popovers. They've got other stuff, mostly protein shakes and a variety of snacks. Believe it or not, Atkins makes low carb pasta, too. I never tried it. I did order some zero calorie Korean noodles once. I honestly can't remember what they were called, but they contained absolutely no digestible material, and came packed in water. The plastic package warned that when opening the package, one would notice the smell of dead fish. Don't be alarmed, they cautioned. Most of the odor would go away when rinsed in warm water. I had ordered a variety pack - a pound of penne, a pound of linguine, and some rigatoni. I tried to kill the fishy taste with Garlic Prego, but ended up throwing the rest of it away, and hoping the bags didn't break before the garbage man came.

I took Marley for a long hike this morn-

ing, and then went for a bike ride. When I got home I was starved. My resolve wavered for a few minutes and I exceeded my daily carb limit with Atkins Bars.



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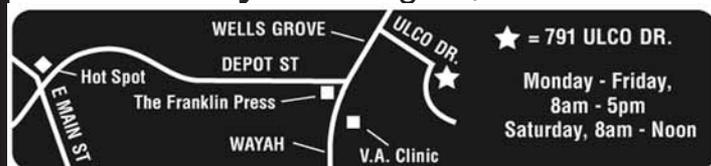
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• COACH'S CORNER •

Harbowl? Brother vs. Brother is a frightening concept

Usually, when I write this column, it is from an outsider's perspective because I do not play professional sports. I only watch them (and according to my wife, I watch them entirely too much, but that is a different story). However, with the Super Bowl now set between Jim Harbaugh's 49ers and John Harbaugh's Ravens, the whole brother against brother storyline has landed right in my wheelhouse.

My brother and I have a long history of unfriendly competition. It all started when we were kids, because let's be honest, where else would it start?

Playing games with Christopher required a couple of things. First and foremost, it required patience, because if I was to win too easily, he would erupt in a violent tantrum that usually resulted in something being broken. That "something" could be anything at all really...toys, glass, my head...pretty much whatever he grabbed out of rage at that particular point and time.

Secondly, brotherly games required a firm grasp of imaginary rules. Keep in mind that these rules



Ryan Potts
ryanpotts@hotmail.com

could be changed at any minute to benefit the necessary party, and often were a point of contention even in the simplest game.

Finally, it was really important to have a good exit strategy, especially in my case, because losing to your younger brother is frowned upon in most circles. In the event that losing became a possibility, it was necessary to "accidentally" press the reset button on the Nintendo or abort the game by invoking the always controversial "Mom strategy" (which involves causing bodily harm to your opponent to the degree that Mom must be summoned -- therefore ending the game without a clear winner or loser but of

ten resulting in early bedtime or a butt kicking.)

It is due to my years of experience with brother against brother battles that I can honestly say I do not envy the Harbaugh brothers whatsoever as they prepare to face off in the Super Bowl.

The media will want you to believe that this is a feel-good story about how they are one big happy family and show the parents wearing half 49er half Raven shirts, etc. Trust me when I say...that is all a bunch of horse pucky.

These two guys have been fighting a battle of oneupmanship their whole lives, and it will all come to a head a week from Sunday. This truly is the Super Bowl for these two guys, because the loser is going to have to hear about it for the rest of his time on earth -- it is the ultimate trump card in the grand schema of the Harbaugh sibling rivalry. Even if the loser goes on to win 2 or 3 Super Bowls, they will still have to live with the fact that they lost head-to-head to the other one, and that, my friends, is not something I would wish upon anyone.

• HS SPORTS •

Lady Highlanders fall to Lady Tigers

By Ryan Potts

Tuesday night, the Lady Highlanders hosted the Lady Tigers from Rosman High School in a non-conference matchup.

The Lady Highlanders struggled against the Rosman man-to-man defense early, and their turnovers allowed Rosman to build a 19-6 lead at the end of the first quarter. Early in the second quarter, the Lady Highlanders fought back with a 6-0 run to cut the lead back down to single digits, but another Rosman surge gave them a 17-point halftime lead that the Lady Highlanders would not threaten again. Emily Shuler led Highlands with 11 points in the 48-27 defeat.

The Highlanders came into Tuesday night's game with Rosman looking to continue their winning

ways after trouncing conference rival Hiwassee Dam the night before.

This had all of the makings of a "trap game" for the young Highlanders, who were facing a senior-laden Rosman team that has played a tough schedule and was better than their record would have them appear.

The trap was sprung early for Highlands, as Rosman's defense and a general malaise from the Highlander offense led to an ugly 15-13 halftime lead for Highlands. The Tigers came out ready to play in the second half, and the Highlanders continued to struggle, as Rosman built a 7-point lead that they would take into the fourth quarter. In the fourth quarter, the Highlanders turned to their upper-

classmen, and they delivered.

First, Tyler Munger capped off a 10-0 run with a driving layup to give the Highlanders the lead. Then, with the Highlanders clinging to a 1-point lead in the final seconds, Taylor Osteen drew a huge charge from Rosman star Hunter Reese to give the Highlanders the ball. After Osteen made 1 of 2 free throws, the Highlanders fouled Duran Scruggs. Scruggs calmly sank both ends of a 1 and 1 to tie the game at 38, and set up the Highlanders for a last second opportunity. From midcourt, the Highlanders ran a play designed for Osteen, but he was doubleteamed and found Munger in the corner for a 3-pointer as time expired. With the win, Highlands improves to 10-5 on the season.

... REDISTRICTING continued from page 1

Citizens living in Districts 1 and 3 can only vote, or run for the Macon County Commission, once every four years. But citizens living in District 2 can run for office every two years, because the three seats held by commissioners from District 2 are staggered.

"For instance, if I had lost, I could run again in two years, but if Paul had lost he would have to wait four years," said Commission Chair Kevin Corbin. "There is an inequity on the two extreme ends of our county."

Commissioners Corbin, Ronnie Beale and Ron Haven represent District 2. Commissioner Paul Higdon represents District 3 and Commissioner Tate represents District 1.

"It's not fair to citizens or those running for office," said Tate. "I think we can make this function a little better than that."

Corbin said a solution might be to align the commission like the school board where there is one representative from Districts 1 and 3; two representatives from District 2 and one-at-large representative. "That would bring some equity," he said.

Chairman Corbin and Vice-Chair Beale suggested County Attorney Chester Jones decipher the state statute on redistricting and return to the March commission meeting with information on the redistricting process.

Redistricting can only be done through legislative action but the county can make a recommendation.

"There are a lot of criteria and I think

... POOL continued from page 1

consider the projects at the upcoming retreat Feb. 14 on the status of the Highlands pool. I believe that the county is ready to invest in the project, but commissioners aren't sure what we are investing in or how to do it," said Tate.

Tate said he would rather see the county assist the town with a new pool versus making a substantial investment in repairs, but said it's not his decision.

"We are currently determining exactly what repairs are needed and whether or not we should be looking at a full rebuild or a new pool," said Town Manager Bob Frye. "We will be discussing this in more detail at our retreat next month. The Macon County Commissioners have told us they will contribute funds to the pool renovation, but we have not determined amounts, yet."

Over the years there has been talk

one is population," said Beale. "But there might be a way to ensure that Highlands has representation that knows more about that community up there versus someone who lives down off the mountain."

Corbin said Highlands has a disproportionate number of people who claim to live in Highlands but who live somewhere else.

Tate said they are taxpayers; they are just not voters, because they claim residency somewhere else.

According to the 2010 census, District 1 has 6,348 people; District 2 has 23,605 and District 3 has 3,969.

"If you divide our population of 33,922 by five commissioners, that's 6,784 people per commissioner. District 3 is under, District 1 is about on par and District 2 is in between," said Tate.

Of course in the season, the population in Highlands and its immediate environs swells to as much as 30,000.

County Manager Jack Horton offered some history.

Before 1978, there were three Macon County Commissioners. After that it became what it is now, five commissioners – one each from the Highlands and Nantahala districts and three from the Franklin district on 2-year staggered terms.

Horton said Commissioner Miles Gregory was the last commissioner from District 1 to live off the mountain. After 1978 all District 1 representatives were from Highlands.

If redistricting is allowed it's presumed Ellijay and Sugarfork would be part of Franklin's District 2 and Scaly Mountain and Highlands, would be District 1.

– Kim Lewicki

about making the pool available year-round rather than just for a three-month period, which would mean covering the pool. This would not only expand exercise options in Highlands during the fall, spring and winter months, but it could open the door to a swim team at Highlands School.

"As to making it a covered pool, the current location makes that impossible as we could not construct a building over the pool that would be safe and stable," said Frye. "Plus, building a new covered pool roughly doubles construction costs and costs to operate roughly triple."

Tate said the type/location/size of a potential new pool or even if it will happen, is up to the town but the county will hopefully assist with its creation financially.

– Kim Lewicki

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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

God never gives up on us



Dr. Lee Bowman
First Presbyterian Church

One of my favorite Peanuts cartoons starts out with Lucy at her five-cent psychology booth. Charlie Brown stops by for some advice about life. "Life is like a deck chair, Charlie," she said. "On the cruise ship of life, some people place their deck chair at the rear of the ship so they can see where they've been. Others place their deck chair at the front of the ship so they can see where they're going."

The good 'doctor' looked at her puzzled client and asked, "Which way is your deck chair facing?" Without hesitating, Charlie replied glumly, "I can't even get my deck chair unfolded."

You might have your own version of Charlie Brown's dilemma in your life. It may involve a vocational choice. It might be a decision to commit your life to another person — or the difficulty you have in doing so. It might be a resolve to give up self-destructive behavior pitted against the realization that this behavior has an addictive quality about it that makes it seem impossible to give up. You might be filled with the desire to make a change in your life, but that 'risk management' side of you is paralyzed at the thought of making a change in the status quo.

As I've thought about the push-pull dynamic we all experience at various points in our lives, I'm reminded of old Zebedee — James and John's dad. He was the one who couldn't get his deck chair unfolded — or as Matthew tells the story, didn't have the wherewithal to leave his fishing nets to follow Jesus. Peter and Andrew, along with James and John sprang to their feet when Jesus called them, but Zebedee wasn't quite ready to make a move.

His behavior makes perfect sense — in part because it's our own from time to time. But he's also a cautionary figure for us — a reminder that we can't stay in the boat our whole lives and still be a follower of Jesus. There's a point at which we need to be open to the truth that Jesus knows more about what's possible for us than we ourselves do.

The hitch is that we don't often see the day-to-day decisions we make as responses to an invitation from Jesus. Follow me, Jesus said. To be a follower of Christ is to be intellectually open to the possibility that the life you live might be more than your own. It is also to be emotionally undefended enough to recognize the gracious and mysterious God who pursues us — like a shep-

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 11

John 3:16

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

Proverbs 3:5

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Sunday night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7
Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting – 7 p.m.

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Holy Communion 1st Sunday of the month
Wednesdays: 9 a.m. Healing and Prayer w/Holy Communion

CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

Rector: Jim Murphy, 252-671-4011
Worshipping at the facilities of Whiteside Presbyterian Church, Cashiers
Sun.: Holy Communion - 9 a.m.; Adult Forum - 10:45 at Buck's Coffee Cafe, Cashiers
Mon.: Bible Study & Supper at homes - 6 p.m.
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

CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Jim Kinard
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
Wednesdays -- 7 p.m.

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Senior Pastor Gary Hewins
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10:30am: Middle & High School; 10:45am: Children's Program.,
10:45am: Worship Service

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

Rev. Bruce Walker • 526-2968
Sundays: Education and choir rehearsal, 9 am, Holy Eucharist Rite II, (sanctuary), 10:30 am

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Dr. Mark Ford, Pastor • 526-4153
Sun.: Worship 10:45 a.m.; School – 9:30 a.m.
Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m., Prayer Meeting – 6:15 p.m.,
Choir – 5 p.m.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Dr. Lee Bowman, Pastor • 526-3175
Sun.: Worship – 11 a.m.; Sun. 8:30a communion service June-Labor Day; School – 9:30
Mondays: 8 a.m. – Men's Prayer Group & Breakfast
Wednesdays – Choir – 7

GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

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Rev. Carson Gibson
Sunday School – 10 am, Worship Service – 11 am
Bible Study – 6 pm

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Randy Reed, Pastor
828-421-9172 • 165 S. Sixth Street
Sundays: Worship – 11

HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson
670 N. Fourth Street (next to the Highlands Civic Center)
Sunday: School 9:30 a.m.; Morning Worship 10:45 a.m., Evening
Worship, 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday: Prayer Service, 6:30 p.m.

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Pastor Paul Christy 526-3376
Sun: School 9:45a.; Worship 9:09 & 10:50.; Youth Group 5:30 p.
Wed: Supper; 6; 7:15 – children, youth, & adults studies; 6:15 –
Adult choir (nursery provided for Wed. p.m. activities)
Thurs:12:30 – Women's Bible Study (nursery)

HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH – ELCA

Chaplain Margaret Howell
2152 Dillard Road – 526-9741
Sundays: Sunday School and Adult discussion group 9:30 a.m.;
Worship/Communion – 10:30
HEALING SERVICE on the 5th Sunday of the month.

MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH

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Pastor Roy Lowe, (828) 526-8425
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
Choir – 6 p.m.

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St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church, Franklin
828-369-9270 or 828-293-5197

MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

Pastor: Clayton Lopez • 828-743-9704
Independent Bible Church
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Rev. Dwight Loggins
Sundays: School –10 a.m.; Worship –11 a.m. & 7
Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg. – 7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Alfred Sizemore • 526-3212
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 10:45 a.m.; Worship – 6
p.m.

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

SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

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... WOOLDRIDGE continued from page 4

the route so well, he automatically stopped at each house needing a milk delivery. He was never tied. Last summer I fed the horse leftover apple cores and we became good friends. Once, while sitting on my front stoop, the horse spotted me while the milkman was several doors down and took the liberty of walking in our front yard, dragging his truck across the sidewalk. He was looking for his apple core. I flipped out! The poor horse was harshly switched as punishment for his behavior. Even though I can't remember that horse's name, I loved that ole mare more than ever now. I guess I felt sorry for her.

Frisky was waiting for me in the front yard and so off we went in the deep snow to my parents' restaurant a block away. Frisky knew the drill. He would have to wait in our restaurant's storeroom until it was time to play or go to school.

When I walked into the restaurant, I found my dad taping a large poster to the front plate glass window. I walked up to see what he was doing. I instantly remembered the poster from last Christmas. It depicted a

jolly Santa Claus wishing everyone a Merry Christmas while choking Adolph Hitler with one hand and holding Tojo by his tail with the other. Santa's foot was crushing Mussolini's back. Even though I knew I should keep my mouth shut, I didn't.

"Sister Marianne says the war's over and it's time to heal," I said, holding my breath.

My dad spun around, pointing his finger at me. I could tell by the tone of his voice he was angry.

"Oh yeah, well, ask our veterans who are missing arms and legs if the war is over for them. Also, while you're at it, ask Sister about how our supposed good friends, the Japs, snuck in and destroyed our Navy."

Dad stood there momentarily staring at me before speaking again, "Sister Marianne needs to stick to teaching the three 'Rs' and not be preaching on the war. You tell her I'm paying a lot of money for you to get an education and not have you lectured on the war. Now get your apron on and get to work. Lucinda needs your help in the kitchen."

• Part III will be presented next Thursday

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... REVAL continued from page 1

lay the 2011 reval due to the recession – a move that was contested by many who reasoned that if values decreased so would taxes.

But Lightner said if a reassessment had taken place in 2011 as scheduled, the average or moderate housing units would have seen a large net increase while high-valued, second-home properties and speculative properties would have seen a decrease.

“The question now is ‘Since we waited are we any better off?’ The answer is without a doubt, yes,” he said. “The market is improving and there are more varied sales of different types of properties. Plus, foreclosures are stabilizing and there is now enough data to develop a schedule of values.”

Once the new values are set, the next question is what will the taxes be?

While values are part of the net tax question, commissioners must consider budget needs, other revenue sources, long-term financial commitments and collection rates. The county’s collection rate for 2012 was 96.38%.

If the overall values decrease and the overall budget needs stay constant, the tax rate will have to increase to get the same amount of revenue prior to the reval, said Lightner.

“We are going to see a 25% drop in value so the tax rate can’t be the same as it was. We still want a revenue neutral tax rate but values have decreased so the tax rate is going to have to go up for the county’s revenues and thereby services to remain the same,” he said.

In 2013 the tax rate was 27.9 cents per \$100 value; back in 2006 it was 38.4 cents.

He said different classes of properties increase and decrease at different intervals, so resulting tax bills will be similar to similar types of property and different from other property classifications.

As in all projects, there are winners and

losers when new values are established, said Lightner.

Macon County has a large second-home resort influence on overall values. Historically, these values trended higher than values in less desirable areas and other less popular counties.

“The recession has caused all types of properties in all geographical locations to back slide but at different degrees of devaluation,” he said.

Western North Carolina and Macon County saw a large slide in market values of high-end second homes, vacant lots and vacant acreage. The large decline in value didn’t materialize in the average-to moderate-valued homes and similar vacant lots.

“To do a reval, we needed information to determine the degree of change for each property type but until recently that hasn’t been available due to few or nonexistent sales data,” he said.

There are 45,000 parcels of land that must be revaluated. If Lightner’s office does it inhouse, it will cost \$300,000. If the job is contracted out, it will cost \$1.4 million. Commissioners agreed to continue to do revals inhouse.

The date 2015 implies that Macon County has two years to have this project completed but Lightner said the task has started and will be completed in the fall of 2014 with the values set to go in to affect Jan. 1, 2015.

From Jan. 2013 through Dec. 2013, field work which includes data collection and photographs of all 45,000 parcels will be conducted; from Sept. 2013 through March 2014, all sales will be organized by type, location and year and construction costs, rents and other data will be gathered; from Sept. 2013 through Feb. 2014, GIS maps will be reviewed for TOPO and zoning which will be applied to parcels culminating with new construction and a review of sales for 2013; Jan. through June 2014, a schedule of values will be developed based on market sales, construction costs, income and use-value and then proposed values will be tested against recent property sales; June-Aug. 2014, the values will be presented to commissioners, a public hearing will be set, followed by adoption by commissioners and the schedule of new values will be advertised.

Property owners will be notified of the change in value Nov. 15, 2014 through Feb. 13, 2015 with appeals accepted Jan. 3, 2015 through Feb. 13, 2015.

The Board of Equalization, which hears and rules on appeals, will hear cases from April 17, 2015 through June 15, 2015.

– Kim Lewicki

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... SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING continued from page 8

herd who searches high and low for one lost sheep, like a woman who tears her house apart searching for one lost coin, like a father who abandons decorum and even courts shame as he runs down the road from his house in order to welcome his prodigal child home again. Following the Christ means risking yourself with the God who has risked everything out of love for you.

The whole Bible — from beginning to end — is an account of the extraordinary lengths to which God will go to win us back and give us life. Even when we have the awful tendency to bed down with darkness and back away from life, God is calling us away from the darkness so that we can become children of light.

You may remember the 1971 film entitled Harold and Maude

that deals with this tension between darkness and light, or in the metaphor of the film, between death and life. It's a quirky love story about an unlikely couple. Harold is twenty years old and obsessed with death — so much so that he has staged several fake suicides, attended the funerals of complete strangers and drives a hearse. Maude, on the other hand, is eighty years old and is equally obsessed — only with life instead of death. She's always looking for the next new experience.

I know this premise may sound like a non-starter, but the film packs a punch. In one scene Harold and Maude are sitting on the floor in her home when Harold comes to the realization, "I have never lived. I've died a few times, but I've never really lived."

And then he tells Maude a story

about an accident he had in a chemistry lab, which left him presumed dead. When the policemen arrived, he was able to watch his mother's reaction to the news. "She put one hand up to her forehead and the other one she reached out, sort of groping for support. Then she collapsed in their arms. I decided right then that I enjoyed being dead."

Maude looked at Harold for a while in silent compassion, and then spoke. "I understand. A lot of people enjoy being dead, but they're not dead really. They're just backing away from life."

The incredible good news of the call to follow the Christ is that no matter how far we have backed away from life; no matter how many ways we have dulled our senses and settled for the hell that we know rather than risk getting beyond it; no matter how much we find ourselves like Charlie Brown, afraid to unfold the deck chair so that we can engage the life we have been given; God hasn't given up on us. And that's nothing short of astonishing.

... DEPT. continued from page 1

Bob Houston discussed Manley's career and the leadership he has provided the department through its many changes.

Chief Manley was elected chief by department members June 2002 following the death of Chief Mike McCall. He served on the force January 1980 through Dec. 2012 with a three-year absence for military service. It was Houston who recruited Manley and five other "sons of fireman."

In Manley's "good-bye" speech, he thanked his co-workers and reminded town officials who were present — Commissioners Gary Drake, Brian Stiehler and Town Manager Bob Frye — that the men of the Highlands Fire & Rescue Department are volunteers who give their time and service to the town and they should be treated accordingly.

Officers for 2013 were also recognized: Chief Ryan Gearhart, Asst. Chief Robbie Forrester — the department's two full-time employees, Fire Captain Matthew Wilson, 1st. Lt. Roger Wilson, 2nd Lt. Jimmy Petrone, Rescue Captain Eric Pierson, Rescue Lt. Jimmy Tate and Secretary/Treasurer Lenny Metrick.

New members were wel-

comed: Matthew Harner, Jason Tardo and Brett Walters. There are now 26 members — four short of the 30-member roster.

Perfect attendance awards were given to Jeremy Keener and Roger Wilson. Honorable Mention was made of Jimmy Petrone who missed two meetings and Zeke Chastain who missed three meetings.

Service pins and certificates were given to John Crowe and Matthew Wilson for 10 years of service; and to Jimmy Petrone, Eric Pierson and Jody Zachary for serving 15 years.

According to the department's annual report, there were seven more calls during 2012 from 2011.

The total number of fire-related calls was 223, one less than in 2011.

Calls inside town limits amounted to 38% (85); and calls outside town limits amounted to 62% (138).

Fire loss in town is estimated at \$12,000 and \$745,000 outside town limits.

Rescue and First-responder calls increased over 2011 — 208 versus 200.

Inside town limits amounted the 51% or 106 calls, outside

• See DEPT. page 14

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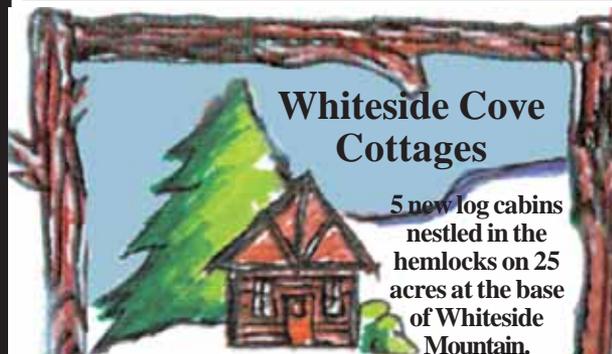
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Upcoming Events

Monday, Jan. 28

- Mirror Lake Improvement Association meeting at the Civic Center at 6 p.m.

- North and South Jackson County Republicans will meet on Monday at 6:30 pm at Ryan's in Sylva. Come early to eat. The agenda will cover Congressman Mark Meadow's D.C. swearing in and also plans for the Jackson County Republican Party Convention to be held on Friday, March 22nd at the Jackson County Senior Center in Sylva.. For additional information contact Chairman Ralph Slaughter @ 828 743-6491; email jacksonctygop@yahoo.com or go to <http://www.jacksoncountygop.com/>

Tuesday, Feb. 5

The Highlands Dialogue Winter-Spring discussion series continues on Tuesday at the Hudson Library from 10-11:30 a.m. The topic: "Jefferson, Militias, the Second Amendment and its Possible Irrelevance for Private Gun Ownership." Handout available at the Library. Coordinator: Rodney Roe.

Tuesdays, Feb. 12 to April 30

- A 12-week course designed for family members of individuals with serious mental illness. It will help you learn to cope successfully with this major challenge in your life, and that, in turn, will help your love one as he/she works toward recovery. Topics include facts about brain disorders, medications, communication techniques, problem-solving, stress reduction, community services and advocacy. Trained volunteers with lived experience teach Family-to-Family. All materials are provided free. Class size is limited. Free for families & friends of individuals with: Clinical Depression, Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder, Panic Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, PTSD, Borderline Personality Disorder and Co-occurring Addictive Disorders. 6:30 to 8:30p. Pre-registration required. Call Ann 828-369-7385 or Mary Ann 828 524-1355.

Thursday, Feb. 14

The League of Women Voters of Macon County will sponsor a program with County Commission Chair, Kevin Corbin. Mr. Corbin who will provide an update on important issues and plans for the coming year. The program will be at noon at Tartan Hall in the Presbyterian Church in Franklin. Attendees are welcome to bring a bag lunch. The public is invited.

... FIRE DEPT. continued from page 11



Perfect Attendance: Jeremy Keener and Roger L. Wilson. Wilson has received the award consecutively for 23 years.



Awards for Service: For 10 years, John Crowe (not pictured) and Matthew Wilson and for 15 years, Jimmy Petrone, Eric Pierson and Jody Zachary.



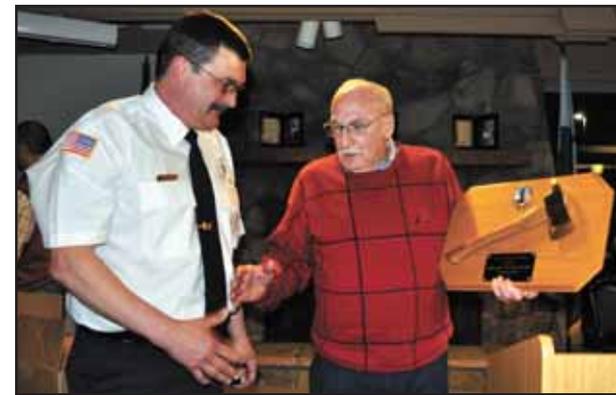
2013 officers: Chief Ryan Gearhart, Asst. Chief Robbie Forrester, Fire Captain Matthew Wilson, 1st Lt. Roger L. Wilson, 2nd Lt. Jimmy Petrone, Rescue Captain Eric Pierson, Rescue Lt. Jim Tate, Secretary/Treasurer Leny Metrick.

town limits was 49% or 102 calls.

Major equipment purchase and improvements include: the purchase of the 2012 Ford (E-One) mini-pumper for \$161,600; Turnout gear (coats, pants, boots and gloves for \$63,185 of which a FEMA grant paid \$54,881. Preparation for the FEMA grant cost \$1,200.

The final payment for the Ladder 12 Truck for \$51,000 was made. Equipment, hose, radio for the mini-pumper cost \$12,100. It coast \$1,940 to paint the inside of the Ladder 12 building and \$590 was spent on a portable generator/inverter.

Not including travel time, 2,167 manhours were spent training – 28 firemen completed 17 area fire & rescue schools at various community colleges. This includes 880 hours for two members who attended the fire academy in Shelby, NC.



Bob Houston presented retiring chief James "Popcorn" Manley, the longest standing chief in the history of the fire department, with the "Fire Axe Award" for 10 1/2 years of service.



Mayor Pro Temp, Eric Pierson presented Manley with a plaque from the town for his service.

Local training and meetings totaled 1,531 manhours; and 1,784 manhours were spent on fire, rescue and first-responder calls.

Bobby Houston, administrative assistant for the department said due to the many hours of training required to become a certified fireman and rescue technician in addition to the hours spent on calls, it continues to be difficult to get qualified applicants. The department has 24 volunteer members, two full-time paid members and one part-time administration person.

Fire alarms increased from 90 in 2011 to 112 in 2012 which amounts to 50% of fire-related calls and most of the alarms are false.

The department continues to bill Jackson County for fire protection to Jackson County property owners in the Highlands fire district. In 2012 \$27,600 was requested and \$6,908 was received. It was used to pay for Jackson County property owners inside the town limits.

Separate from Jackson County, Highlands Falls Country Club paid \$5,375 for its Jackson County property owners; Cullasaja Club paid \$10,346 and Wildcat Cliffs Country Club/Cowee Gap paid \$2,400. These amounts pay for coverage until July 1, 2013.

The NC State Insurance Department survey/inspection results improved the in-town fire rating from 5 to 4; and improved the out-of-town rating with in the five-mile district from 9 to 5. The lower rating number usually means a substantial savings on fire insurance premiums.

– Kim Lewicki



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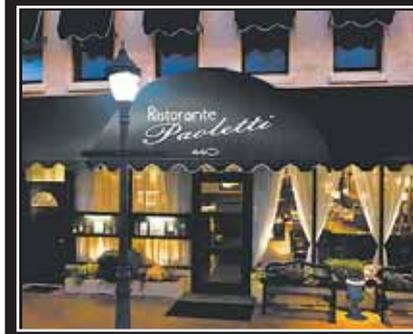
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