Town makes opposition to Advanced Hydropower known

Evidently, Advanced Hydropower still has Highlands in its sights despite hope expressed early this year by Town Manager Bob Frye that the project was dead in its tracks despite hope expressed earlier on by the company. The preliminary permit was the first step prior to filing a license application – which was issued early fall 2014.

The proposed project would consist of a 50-foot-wide, 2-foot-high concrete diversion weir; a 50-foot-wide, 2-foot-high coanda effect screened intake structure; a 2,000-foot-long, 36-inch-diameter above ground penstock; a 30-foot-high, 25-foot-long powerhouse containing one crossflow generating unit with a total capacity of 775 kilowatts; a 40-foot-long, 40-foot-wide tailrace; a 60-foot-long, 12.47 kilo-Volt transmission line – with an estimated average output of 775 kilowatts.

Developer gets reprieve after cutting down trees

Instead of demanding the fine be paid, this ‘giving’ season, the Town Board opted to accept other arrangements when trees were cut down in the commercial district without a permit.

At the Thurs., Dec. 10 Town Board meeting, Planning Director Randy Feierabend told the board nine white pine trees had been illegally cut down along the back lot line of the old Stop n’ Shop site where the property abuts the alley.

The site has long been an eyesore and the buffer of trees and shrubs were scrappy and diseased, but according to the town’s Unified Development Code, tree ordinance trees over eight inches in diameter can’t be cut down in the commercial district without a permit.

According to Feierabend, around Nov. 23 calls began coming in.

‘Operation Christmas Box’ reaches out to the elderly

At the Dec. 10 Town Board meeting, commissioners unanimously agreed to restock Lake Sequoyah with $10,000 worth (10 acres worth) of resident fish – fish that were already living in the lake but may have been relocated when the lake was drained for the water intake project. Except for a large catfish found stranded on a rock below the dam, Mayor Pat Taylor said there wasn’t a lot of evidence of fish going missing from the lake. However, just in case, the town put crappie, brown trout, large mouth bass and others into the 56-acre lake on Tuesday, Dec. 22. The town is encouraging a “catch and release” program.

PUBLICATION NOTICE:

This week’s paper is a combination paper for Dec. 23 and Dec. 31. It will be on the streets for 2 weeks. The next regular edition will be Thursday, Jan. 7. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
**Mayor on Duty**

Looking back and looking ahead

Christmas is the Advent Season of hope, faith, love and anticipation. My hope to all is that you and your family will have a season full of love and hope as we approach a new year.

Looking back from my perspective as mayor, it has been a very good year for Highlands. I am hopeful and optimistic for our community in the new year.

Let me recap some accomplishments from 2015.

Highlands had a very good year in retail sales, and there was a rebound, to some degree, in the real estate market. The first county property tax revaluation since the Great Recession was done this year. It revealed an overall 7.5% increase in property value inside the town limits of Highlands. While some of my friends, as well as myself, may not be enthusiastic about this revaluation and the resulting increased property taxes, there were several areas in the county where property values were appraised significantly lower. I am thankful that property values in the Town of Highlands continue to hold somewhat steady.

I am also delighted we survived the state legislature’s adjustments to the sales tax distribution. In early spring when the changes were first rolled out, Highlands stood to lose $630,000 in sales tax revenue to our general fund. After a lot of wailing and posturing from folks throughout the state, the final sales tax bill turned out to be a better deal for the town. While under this new formula Highlands will return more revenue to the state, we should see modest increases in town sales tax revenues in the coming years. Let’s hope the economy continues to grow, and Highlands continues to have robust retail sales.

This past year the town completed several major infrastructure projects. A long overdue remake of the ball field was completed. Our new enclosed swimming pool is off to a very good start. The Lake Sequoyah water intake project and dam maintenance repair are nearing completion. The system should be operational early next year.

A major town achievement was the opening of the first phase of Kelsey Hutchinson Founders Park this past summer. The generosity of the lead donors, Art and Angela Williams, propelled this wonderful facility to reality. Now, at year’s end, ice skating in the recently completed park plaza gets underway in the first week of January.

So, what does Highlands face for 2016? First, with the new Highlands Town Board, I am very hopeful that we can continue having responsible local government. Second, we have just approved a new broadband/internet system and town department. My vision is that we continue to develop this critical communication system that will serve the entire plateau community.

Finally, I anticipate Highlands will continue to be a community of hope, care and concern. The wonderful volunteer and non-profits programs that so many people in the community support are critical pillars that make Highlands exceptional.

May I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas in anticipation and hope for the new year.

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**Letters**

The newspaper on the 17th

**Dear Editor,**

There were so many good articles in this past week’s newspaper. Pat Allen blanketed our wonderful town with personal tributes. Glenda Zahner wrote an excellent letter advocating the wilderness status of our precious forests.

If you did not have a chance to read these articles and letters try to get a copy and read both. Both writers have big hearts. Go to www.highlandsinfo.com click on the Dec. 17 edition.

One thing that I read was disturbing to me. Our Town Board has decided not to include “In God We Trust” on license plates which are on town of Highlands cars.

The comment was made that not everyone is a Christian. This is true -- We are home for Jewish people, maybe Muslims and those who believe but don’t necessarily belong to a specific church. All of these people believe in God. Not all of them are Christians.

I have been looking around and can find nothing that claims we have freedom FROM religion. Freedom OF religion but not from it. No one has told Highlanders which religion to practice or even that one must practice religion. So, what the town of Highlands has done has been to omit the words which make our town special and a “cut above.”

Glenda Bell

Highlands

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**More info about ‘In God We Trust’**

**Dear Editor,**

Most interesting discussion in the December 17th edition regarding the expression “In God We Trust.” I would like to add some historical background on this topic centered on my home state Rhode Island.

A) In 1636 Roger Williams became a renegade from the Puritan colony in Boston and landed at what is now Providence, RI. He founded a colony based on two principles that were unheard of anywhere in the world in 1636:

1. Religious freedom for all (remember the Pilgrims were escaping religious persecution in England and sailed to Providence town and then Plymouth by way of Holland),
2. Separation of church and state - Williams was escaping the theocracy of the Massachusetts Bay colony.

These two principles have directly contributed to our country’s greatness.

B) My alma mater Brown University was founded in 1764- our motto is “In Deo Speramus” meaning “In God We Trust.” This still appears on the official university seal. It is alleged that approximately 80 -100 years later someone affiliated with Brown who worked at the mint decided to use this expression on our currency.

C) Speaking about my home state Rhode Island let me tell you about the episode of the GASPEE which occurred a full year before the Boston Tea Party for which we receive little credit. The colonists were rebelling against unfair taxation and England instituted a shipping blockade along most ports in the colonies including Narragansett Bay. In 1772 some of the Providence “rabble” imbibed a bit too much one night at a local tavern, rowed down the bay and lured the British blockade ship the HMS Gaspee onto a sandbar near Wickford harbor. They removed the crew, tarred and feathered the captain, and burned the ship down to the water line. Needless to say this did not please King George.

(See www.gaspee.org )

Regards and Happy Holidays to all.

David A Snyder, MD
Cashiers and Boca Raton, Fl

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**Annual Resolution Run & Walk is Jan. 1**

A New Year means a new chapter in your life: new opportunities, new adventures. Want to start 2016 off right? Want to lose some weight? Get back in shape? Resolve to meet at the Founders Park at 9 a.m. on January 1 to start it off with a run or a walk.

According to an article in Runners World magazine, there really is something to be said for New Year’s Resolutions. “People who make New Year’s resolutions are 10 times more likely to achieve their goals than those who don’t,” according to John C. Norcross, PhD, a University of Scranton professor of psychology who has made a study of so-called “Resolutionaries” and how they follow through.
Hazel Irene Henry Brewer, 80, of Franklin, passed away Friday, December 11, 2015.

Born in Highlands, NC, she was the daughter of the late James Henry and Dena Ramey Henry. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband Thomas Eugene Brewer; one brother, June Henry and three sisters, Louise Keener, Patsy Hedden and Edith Patton. Hazel enjoyed fishing, crocheting, crafting and loved watching the Tarheels. She loved spending time with her family and grandchildren and especially enjoyed hunting “rollie pollies” with her great grandson, Cooper. Hazel was a member of Sugarfork Baptist Church.

She is survived by five children, Freda Owens and husband Gene of Franklin, Shelby Rhodes and husband Richard of Mobile, AL, Kenneth Brewer and wife Peggy of Franklin, Rick Brewer and wife Sherry of Franklin and Rochelle Reed and husband Donald of Monroe, GA; one brother, Frankie Henry of Sparta, GA; one sister, Nancy Harkins of Knoxville, TN; ten grandchildren, Ashley, Meagan, Melissa, Billy, Everett, Chris, Justin, Jake, Jeb and Chelsea and eleven great grandchildren, Cooper, Madelaine, Sophie, Blake, Gracie, Sydney, Kyleah, Aubrie, Reese, Faron and Griffin. She is also survived by several nieces and nephews.

Funeral Service held at 2 p.m. Wednesday, December 16 at Sugarfork Baptist Church. Rev. Greg Rogers officiating. The eulogy was by Ashley Owens and personal remarks were presented by Jake Brewer.

Pallbearers were Gene Owens, Donald Reed, Michael Keener, Jake Brewer, Jeb Brewer, Chris Brewer and Eric Rogers.

Macon Funeral Home was in charge of the arrangements.

Online condolences can be made at maconfuneralhome.com

TJ Bailey to match charitable donations

TJ Bailey for Men is matching, dollar for dollar, whatever they receive in donations toward 13 different charitable organizations.

The popular men's clothing store has been in business for 30 years and owner Anita Lupoli's generous spirit has shone throughout the years. In an effort to expand TJ Bailey's typical contributions, Lupoli has invited customers to donate.

Customers can donate online and in-store. TJ Bailey has barcodes of different amounts for all of the charities and, of course, anyone who would like to donate more than the set amount is encouraged to do so.

The list of charities TJ Bailey and their customers have committed to supporting this season is of a wide variety including loads of firewood and fuel during winter for locals. The program will be going on through February, and every contribution helps.

To learn more about each charity and donate, please visit: www.tjbmens.com/brand/donations
### Highlands Area Dining

**100% Mexican Food!**

**Every Wed. and Thursday FREE SOUP**

Open Tues.-Sun. • 11a to 10p
526-0608 • 30 Dillard Road • Highlands

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**Cyprus International Cuisine**

Dinner: 7 nights a week 5-10p
For reservations call: 526-4429
Main Street • Highlands

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**Wild Thyme Gourmet Restaurant**

828-526-4035

Serving Lunch and Dinner Year-Round.
Gourmet Foods, Full Service Bar
Town Square at 343-D Main St. • Highlands

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**Paoletti**

‘Our 31st Year’
526 • 4906

Serving Lunch Daily
11a to 4p
Serving Dinner from 5:30p
7 days a week

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**On the Verandah Restaurant**

www.ontheverandah.com
US 64 west • Highlands

Open for Dinner Fri. & Sat. at 5:30p.
Also open Christmas Eve and Dec. 26-31.
828-526-2338

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**Wolfgang’s Restaurant & Wine Bistro**

Celebrating our 21st Season

Bistro Service Starts at 4 pm • Dining Room Service Starts at 5:30 pm
Taking Reservations for New Year’s Eve
828-526-3807

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**Buck’s COFFEE CAFE**

Coffee • Espresso Drinks
Smoothies • Hot Soup
Paninis • Baked Goods

On Main Street • Highlands
7 days a week • 7a to 6p • 526-0020

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**Asia House**

Japanese • Asian • Thai • Hibachi Cuisine

Open Year Round 6 days/wk
Mon, Tues, Thurs. 11a to 10p
Fri., & Sat., 11a to 11p
Sun., noon to 10p
CLOSED WEDNESDAYS
828-787-1680 or 828-787-1900
We Cater!
151 Helen’s Barn Ave., Highlands
annual generation of 3,300 megawatt-hours which would be sold as Green Energy on the open market.

Despite jumping through the required hoops to oppose the project including playing the “historic” card and requesting intervention by Rep. Mark Meadows, in a letter dated Nov. 17, 2015, Advanced Hydropower requested the town to outline its concerns about the project.

On December 14, a letter was sent to Advanced Hydropower outlining the town’s many concerns.

“We understand Advanced Hydropower has received a permit from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to study the feasibility of constructing a hydropower facility on the Cullasaja River, downstream of the Highlands’ existing Lake Sequoyah concrete dam, water supply intake, and wastewater treatment plant.

“We further understand from your letter that Advanced Hydropower intends to utilize the existing building located downstream of the dam, which was the Town’s original powerhouse, for the electrical generation equipment proposed for the project,” reads the letter.

“Back in the 1920s, Highlands constructed the concrete dam on the Cullasaja River, along with the power house, penstock and electrical transmission lines as part of its hydroelectric plant project which provided the initial electricity for the town.”

While the hydro-electric plant has been out of operation for some time, Highlands relies on the dam to impound water in the Cullasaja River (Lake Sequoyah) that serves as the drinking water supply for its water customers.

“The Town is nearing the completion of a new 2 million gallons per day (mgd) water supply intake project on Lake Sequoyah, which also includes a cold water release system and dam repairs. This project is intended improve the reliability of the Town’s water supply, while at the same time cool the waters to improve the Cullasaja River’s trout habitat downstream of the dam.

“Over the past 20 years, the Town of Highlands has invested millions of dollars in its water and wastewater infrastructure located in close proximity to your proposed project. It is vital that the investment of our taxpayers’ funds be protected. In conjunction with our infrastructure improvements projects, we have taken great measures to ensure that this environmentally sensitive area is preserved to the greatest extent possible.

“As one example, the Town has committed significant funds to restock Lake Sequoyah with resident fish ($10,000) after the ongoing water supply intake project is completed. In addition, scenic Lake Sequoyah and its dam are a significant focal point of our tourism industry, and maintaining this aesthetic beauty is of paramount importance,” continues the letter.

The town went on to list other concerns one being that there have been significantly reduced inflows of water into the lake during drought conditions; that the dam (lake) provides storage for the town’s drinking supply and there is no guarantee there will always be enough water to generate power below. Providing drinking water for town customers will always be a priority.

As part of the expansion of its increased water supply intake project, the town has worked closely with federal and state agencies to incorporate a cold water release valve to protect the Class B trout waters downstream.

“The proposed Advanced Hydropower project includes the construction of a 2-feet high concrete diversion weir across the river, very near the Town’s existing concrete dam. The NC Wildlife Resource Commission and the NC Department of Environmental Quality have been diligently pursuing measures to lower the water temperature in the river to restore the trout population downstream of the dam.

“Our cold water release being constructed at the dam is aimed at conveying cooler water from the bottom of the lake into the river downstream of the dam. We are concerned that the proposed weir and powerhouse turbine will result in increased water temperatures that will be harmful to the trout habitat.

In addition the letter outlines concerns regarding the potential damage to the foundation of the dam during the construction of the proposed concrete diversion weir and 36” diameter penstock.

“Our concrete dam is about 90 years old, and we are very concerned that construction could cause damage to the structural components of the dam, especially if rock blasting occurs.

“It is also important to note that the Lake Sequoyah dam has been determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and is currently on the State Study List, which is a preliminary step in the review of potential nominations to the National Register. Therefore, preserving the structural integrity of the dam is vital.

“In addition, the Lake Sequoyah dam is classified by the State of North Carolina as a “High Hazard” dam due to the risk of serious property damage and possible loss of life if the dam fails. Therefore, any construction work close to the dam is a serious,” it reads.

The town is also concerned that the diversion weir and exposed penstock located within the floodway of the Cullasaja River could increase the 100-year and 500-year
B R E A K F A S T

Full breakfast made to order every morning until 11:00 am
Cage-free eggs, waffles, french toast, sausage, ham, homemade biscuits, muffins, croissants. Espresso bar and coffee roasted in-house.

L U N C H & D I N N E R

Grill
Every day from 11:00am - close
Fresh angus burgers, fresh Natural chicken breasts, fish or chicken tenders, cooked to order, hand-cut fries, salads, homemade soups, daily specials. See our website for more info.

Pizza
Every day from 11:00am - close
Authentic Neapolitan and NY deck oven pizzas made from scratch. Pasta bowls, daily specials and weeknight dinner specials. See our website for more info.

Soup & Salad Bar
Mon-Sat 11:00am - close
Fresh salads, homemade dressings, soups, chili and more.
$9.99 each (dine in) or $9.99 a pound (to go)

Weekday Lunch Special
Monday – Friday 11am to 2pm
Pizza, pasta, soup and salad bar
Continuous fresh pizza from our pizza ovens, pastas, fresh breads from our bakery, plus the entire soup and salad bar... $9.99 each (dine in) or $9.99 a pound (to go)

SUNDAY SOUTHERN BRUNCH BAR
Every Sunday from 11am – 3pm
Skillet fried chicken, country angus steak, skillet corn, biscuits & preserves, mashed potatoes, veggies, cobbler, plus the entire soup & salad bar.
$11.99 (dine in) or $9.99 a pound (to go)

PREPARED FOODS
A large selection of take-away items fully prepared, ready to take home including grilled pork loins, homemade mac & cheese, mashed potatoes, herb-rubbed chicken, made-in-house bbq, chicken salad deli salads & much more!

DINNER TO GO
A different full dinner every night. Serves four serving Monday through Saturday from 4:30 until we sell out – Call ahead to reserve.

Monday: choose either:
Four chicken and four cheese enchiladas, refried beans, montery rice, homemade tortilla chips, salsa, shredded lettuce, tomatoes, sour cream.
Or...
24 buffalo wings or 2 lbs chicken tenders and hand cut fries.
$20.95 serves four

Tuesday: Made in-house Italian sausage lasagna and a large house salad.
$20.95 serves four

Wednesday: Chicken or steak pot pie and a large salad.
$20.95 serves four

Thursday: Roasted meatloaf with mashed potatoes, gravy and a large salad.
$20.95 serves four

Friday: Wild caught fried shrimp, baked potatoes, fish & coleslaw.
$23.95 serves four

Saturday: In-house smoked bbq, coleslaw, apple and bacon-baked beans, and yeast rolls.
$20.95 serves four

Weeknight Pizza Special:
Monday through Thursday 4:30 to close
16 inch New York style pizza with up to 5 toppings or baked pasta with either italian sausage or chicken. Both come with garlic bread and salad. Serves four for $20.95

W I N E  M A R K E T
Browse our Wine Spectator award-winning selection of wines w/ the best pricing in town. Run by a friendly & knowledgeable staff. Beer & wine available by the glass while you dine & shop.

B U T C H E R
We sell only 100% premium angus beef, hand-cut in house. Stock up for the weekend every Thursday with 35% off all steaks and ground beef. Then stop by the take-out case to complete your dinner with twice baked potatoes, fresh salads and more!

S P E C I A L T Y  C H E E S E S
Dozens of cheeses, tapenades, olives and specialty items to choose from including our made in-house crackers.

B A K E R Y
Fresh loaves, baguettes, pastries, pies, layer and specialty cakes. Everything made from scratch.
years.

This isn’t the first time that the school system was made aware of the faulty work, in fact, Shenaut Construction, which dissolved as a company in 2010, was hired as the general contractor on the project and as soon as the project was complete, were made aware of the problems. The school system even pursued legal action and according to school system John Henning Jr., who was not employed as the school system’s attorney at the time, might have received a settlement. If the school system did receive a settlement, it is likely it was not enough to replace the roof and instead those funds were probably used to temporarily fix the problem. The school system’s record is currently going through the school system’s record to find out for certain.

Bell said that local contractors have looked at the project and said that the roof doesn’t meet current roofing standards and is beyond the point of repair. The only solution to this point would be to replace the roof entirely. While a roofing company out of Asheville that has worked with the school system successfully in the past is set to come out and give an approximate cost on the repairs, Bell said he believes it would cost between $175,000-$200,000 to replace.

Stephanie McCall, who represents the Highlands district on the board of education, said that the status of the roof has gotten so bad, that if you go into the gym and look up, you can see daylight coming through the holes that have formed. McCall said in addition to the holes and the leaking into the gym, the current state of the roof is a safety problem.

McCall said she was recently told that last year a student slipped and fell on ice outside the gym that had formed as a result of the improper drainage system on the roof. The student was injured and was out of sports for four months.

“This has become a safety issue and something needs to be done before we are faced with a lawsuit,” said McCall.

Despite the roof’s current condition, the replacement was not listed as a priority on this year’s capital outlay request to county leaders.

Each year, principals compose a list of needs for their schools and submit it to the board of education. The board then further prioritizes the list and submits a request to county commissioners.

Then, each year, in addition to the local expense contribution, the county provides the school system with a capital outlay budget for infrastructure repairs throughout the district. This year’s allocation was increased to $300,000. The funds are traditionally used for capital outlay improvements identified by administrators.

Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin, said he is investigating the issue to see why it hasn’t been put on the capital outlay request list over the last 10 years.

“I am still trying to understand the history of this issue,” said Dr. Baldwin. “As discussed Monday night, the school system attempted to get the contractor and roofing contractor to stand by their work, but was unsuccessful. It is my understanding that our maintenance has been ‘patching’ these leaks for the past 10 years. Obviously, with this being a new roof the school system thought/hoped that the most recent fix would correct the problem. However, each new fix would last for a period of time and then re-open or new leaks would emerge. As time has gone by, the leaks have become more frequent and more difficult to deal with. They are also causing damage to other components of the facility. Therefore, a local architect offered to look at the roof and render a professional opinion. It was at this time that we learned that we will never be able to completely fix the current roof without a compete replacement.”

According to school officials, the repair project can’t wait until the next capital outlay funding cycle and needs to be addressed immediately. Dr. Baldwin suggested setting up a joint facilities review committee meeting with county commissioners to discuss the project needs. Funding for the project would have to come from the county since the school system does not have a fund balance to pull from anymore. That meeting is expected to be scheduled in the coming weeks.
flood elevations and its tourism livelihood could be jeopardized because the area around the Lake Sequoyah dam is one of the top sightseeing and recreational attractions for the town.

“Visitors and residents utilize this area for scenic photographs and leisure activities in the river at the base of the dam. Recently, the Town Board committed $82,000 for the construction of a berm and mature landscaping to screen the new raw water pump station at the lake from view. We are very concerned that the proposed concrete weir, intake screen, and penstock will adversely impact the aesthetics of this area, damage our tourism industry, and reduce recreational opportunities for our visitors and residents.”

The letter goes on to outline concerns that the project would adversely impact wildlife habitat along the river bank, the quality of water in the river during construction, and bank erosion when trees and rocks are removed during construction.

How Advance Hydropower would access the powerhouse on the river below U.S. 64 west near Bridal Veil Falls is another concern because the construction of a road or even a pedestrian walkway would remove even more trees.

And finally the town said “U.S. 64 is a scenic entrance to the Town of Highlands that is utilized by thousands of visitors each year. The many waterfalls on the river, Bridal Veil Falls, Lake Sequoyah and our dam make this one of the signature scenic highways in North Carolina. During construction of the proposed project, we are extremely concerned that traffic flow will be adversely impacted, which could impede or discourage visitors from enjoying the beautiful scenery and cause reductions in the tourism industry for our town. In closing, the Town of Highlands is not supportive of this proposed Advanced Hydropower project at this time.”

“This is the initiation of the process in our view,” said Mayor Pat Taylor. “I think their plan to divert most of the river water to their penstock, thereby significantly reducing the flow in the natural path of the river, is very problematic from an environmental standpoint. We will have spent nearly $200,000 in restoring the pump house area with landscaping and restocking the lake with fish. I think we have demonstrated best practices in the process. I would expect nothing less from Advance Hydro when they disturb the landscape in putting in that 1/4 mile pipe to the powerhouse. And, I suspect the USFS would be opposed to such activities including cutting a road down to the powerhouse.”

Having requested and received the town’s concerns, Mayor Taylor said he’s not sure what Advanced Hydropower’s next step will be.

– Kim Lewicki
COREY JAMES GALLERY
Christmas Sale!
Everything 1/2 Price
Carrying a wide variety of natural products for your Mind, Body & Home.
On the corner of 3rd & Spring
(828) 526-4818
Angel w/Heart on Blue
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Organic Fresh Juices & Smoothies
and Salads To Go!
526-5999
Corner of Foreman Road & Hwy 64 east
Mon-Sat 10a to 5p
SALE! SALE! SALE! SALE!

In Highlands: On Main St. in Town Square behind Kilwins
828-526-9122 • www.corrico.com

### RE TRANS continued from page 9

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**First Presbyterian Church of Highlands**

**Cordially invites you to a Christmas Season filled with Meditation, Music, and Candlelight.**

**Thursday, December 24, 2015**

**Christmas Eve Candlelight & Communion Service**

4:30 p.m. Harp Prelude
Valerie Whitcup, harpist
Candlelight & Communion Service designed for the entire family at 5:00 p.m.
Hymn by Rev. Emily Wilmarth

471 Main Street, PO Box 548, Highlands, NC 28741
828-526-3175 Fax 828-526-0784
e-mail: fpc@frontiera.com
Visit us on the web at www.fpchighlands.org
And all through the house, not a creature was stirring. Nope, strike that—everyone was stirring at our house. The animals and I were up at seven, followed at eight by my husband. I had my coffee, read the paper, headed out in search of unique Christmas containers for next year and struck gold at my first stop.

We are one of five couples who meet for dinner every year in mid December. The hosts beautifully decorate their home and provide the main course of grilled beef tenderloin, while the rest of us bring appetizers, sides, wine, and dessert. Most importantly, we all come bearing gift bags. Years ago, I found cloth bags instead of the usual paper ones and ever since, it has become my annual quest to find interesting containers. One year I found wooden sleighs another year tin snowmen. Last year for some reason I went to Hobby Lobby, someplace I never go, and found tall decorated Christmas boxes to fill with goodies, so it seemed a good place to start this time.

Finding surprises for the containers is a year-long adventure too. I like to shop while on vacation, and I bring back things like mustard from Dijon, France, maple syrup from Vermont, or lavender lotion from the Olympic Peninsula in Washington. Homemade sugared peanuts are the only constants in my yearly gift bags and it’s clear that our friends consider them mandatory.

'Twas the Day after Christmas
In years past, the bags were primarily filled with homemade cookies, candies and breaks but we've stopped off on those, thank goodness. The two edible goodies I can count on receiving every year are peanut brittle and Chex mix, and those don't last long at our house. On Christmas Day we are one of five couples who meet for dinner every year in mid December to celebrate Christmas. The hosts beautifully decorate their home and provide the main course of grilled beef tenderloin, while the rest of us bring appetizers, sides, wine, and dessert. Most importantly, we all come bearing gift bags. Years ago, I found cloth bags instead of the usual paper ones and ever since, it has become my annual quest to find interesting containers. One year I found wooden sleighs another year tin snowmen. Last year for some reason I went to Hobby Lobby, someplace I never go, and found tall decorated Christmas boxes to fill with goodies, so it seemed a good place to start this time.

Finding surprises for the containers is a year-long adventure too. I like to shop while on vacation, and I bring back things like mustard from Dijon, France, maple syrup from Vermont, or lavender lotion from the Olympic Peninsula in Washington. Homemade sugared peanuts are the only constants in my yearly gift bags and it’s clear that our friends consider them mandatory.

Kathy Manos Penn is a columnist for the Dunwoody Crier and is now happily retired from a corporate career in communications and leadership development. Find more of her musings at TheInk-Penn.blogspot.com or contact her at kathymanospenn@gmail.com.
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Happy Holidays and remember.... Shop Local!

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- CP Shades
- THML

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- AG
- Hudson
- Mother

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In Shelby Place, this spacious home has quality finishes throughout and easy living plan expands for guests'/family comfort. Huge screened porch and 2-car garage. Offered at $595,000. mls #74675

12.06 ACRES on the top of a flat knoll, several acres cleared. 1960 brick Ranch is a blank canvas ready for a major renovation for today's standards. Views of Little Yellow and Whiteside Mountain. Offered at $995,000. mls #72885

Great open plan with passive solar heating, large stone fireplace and native landscaping. Kitchen and master suite totally renovated in 1999. 3 BR/2.5 BA with wrap around deck. Garage & workshop. Walking to fishing lake and tennis courts. Offered at $349,000. mls #74035

1BD/2BA Historic Real Log Cabin with barn on almost 3.5 acres. Exudes charm. Real Stone fireplace, wood floors, tile bath, laundry hook up. Offered at $325,000. MLS #75551

Updated home. 3BD, den and a multipurpose room in the main house plus guest room and full bath above the 2 car garage. Large deck, covered porch. View of distant mountains. Offered at $875,000. mls #73201

Great log cabin with rock fireplace. Open great room, dining room, kitchen, hardwood floors and split floor plan. Large open back deck with winter view of Rabun Bald Mountain and front covered deck. Wheel chair accessible. One car garage. 17-acre community lake Osage. MLS# 67737, Offered at $299,000.

Great in town location. Walk to town, Bascom, Mirror Lake. The 3 bedroom, 2 bath home features beautiful wood floors, a wood burning fireplace, a one car garage and an upstairs room that you can use as your private sanctuary - a studio, library, reading nook or playroom. Offered at $249,000. mls #82850

Location at the end of the road in desirable Webbmont. This adorable 2BD/2BA cottage has new upgrades throughout. A private, cozy mountain charmer! Offered at $269,900. mls #82712

8BD/8 1/2 BA family retreat. Blue Valley view in back and Whiteside Mountain view in front. Game room and exercise room. Formal sitting room, keeping room, formal dining, kitchen, master bedroom with fireplace and an office. Also, an attached guest house at ground level. Beautiful grounds. Membership at Highlands Country Club available subject to approval. Offered at $3,900,000. MLS# 65882

This little cottage has original Highlands charm and close to town and Mirror Lake. The 3 bedroom, 2 bath home features beautiful wood floors, a wood burning fireplace, an office, family room, and outdoor living room. 2 possible additional building sites. Offered at $995,000. mls #82990

Renovated cabin loaded with features: cathedral ceiling, fireplace, screened porch, mountain view, custom kitchen New hardwood floors, heat and air system and generator. Great master suite with 2 guest areas. Offered at $425,000. mls #66120

Great farmhouse design on a large 1.54 acre lot. Garage with finished upper story office, or guest quarters, main house with efficiency apartment. 3BD/3 1/2 BA. Town water, walk to Mirrormont Pond and Mirror Lake. Shown by appointment only. Offered at $399,000. MLS #70127

Great in town, in the woods, charming and comfortable three bedrooms with fireplace in the master bedroom. Owner wants to sell. MLS# 63260, Offered at $399,000.

Close to town, in the woods, charming and comfortable three bedrooms with fireplace in the master bedroom. Offered at $425,000. mls #82456

Offered at $299,000. MLS #74462 - 1BD/1BA. Great starter home or quiet getaway. Needs some TLC. Offered at $199,000. mls #74462

2,700 SF+ Commercial building on US 64 east near Highlands Falls Country Club. Great exposure and wonderful setting overlooks a bold creek and room for dwelling or addition. Offered at $575,000.00. mls #74556

3BD/1 1/2 BA. Great starter home or quiet getaway. Needs some TLC. Offered at $199,000. mls #74462

Over 4 acres on the southern exposure of Satulah Mountain; private but inside Highlands' Town limits. Amazing views of Blue Valley and the lakes of SC. Beautiful mountain log cabin with 2BR/2.5 BA. Also septic permits for 4 homes. Property adjoins Highlands Conservancy land. Offered at $529,000. mls #68828

Gentleman's estate features main house, party shed, guesthouse, pasture, pond, and waterfall! Main house has living room w/fireplace, covered porch, Master bedroom and bath, loft, kitchen, dining, guestroom and porch. Lower level features 2 BR, den and bath. Guest house has 1BD/1BA. Great room. Offered at $549,000. mls #73087

Within Wildcat Cliffs Country Club, The Birches features this lovely 3BD/3BA condo with covered porch, cathedral ceilings, custom kitchen. Membership requirements. Offered at $524,500. mls #79242
2015 Was A Positive Year for Real Estate on the Plateau

This current year was a strong one for real estate sales on the Highlands/Cashiers Plateau.

Overall sales of homes were up 21% for the number of homes sold and 8.4% in total volume. A positive growth was in homes 1 million dollars and over. In 2014, 45 homes sold for 1 million and above. In 2015, 64 homes sold in that price range—an increase of 42%!

However, countering this trend, 5 homes sold over 3 million in 2014 and only 1 home sold over 3 million in 2015.

Home sales inside the various country clubs were as follows:

Number of Homes Sold in 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club Volume Total Sales</th>
<th>Number of Homes Sold in 2015</th>
<th>Club Volume Total Sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cullasaja Club</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>$11,530,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlands C.C.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>$10,757,099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlands Cove</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$9,390,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlands Falls C.C.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>$11,336,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountaintop</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$5,435,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wade Hampton</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$6,964,583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildcat Cliffs C.C.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>$4,584,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Does this mean that the market has rebounded to “pre-adjustment” levels? No. But the traction of Buyers has increased this year, particularly in the luxury segment of the market. These facts support an optimistic prediction for 2016. However, it is an election year which historically means buyers may wait until after the election to make major decisions such as buying a second home.

This is the time of year to pause and give thanks for our many blessings including our clients, our friends, our fellow brokers, our families and for this amazing area we call home.

Wood and I have lived in Highlands and owned Highlands Sotheby’s International Realty for the last 15 years. Each year is just as interesting, fulfilling and fun as the last one. The main reason is the kind and gracious people who are attracted to this area and become our friends and colleagues.

We thank each and every one of you for another wonderful year on the Plateau. Happy Holidays to everyone and warmest wishes for a healthy and prosperous 2016!

• Jody and Wood Lovell own Highlands Sotheby’s International Realty which is the top selling company in Highlands in 2015. They recently moved their downtown office to the corner of Main Street and Highway 64. Jody was the top-selling agent on the entire MLS again this year. With 20 brokers strong locally and an international network of 700 offices in 64 countries, please call them at 526-4104 for all of your real estate needs.
Amazing waterfalls and bold streams with 700 feet on Buck Creek and 700 feet on other side of the creek and bordering USFS. Immaculate, exceptionally built home on 5.48 acres with all the bells and whistles, including a full house generator. $995,000 MLS #82444

Sequoyah Point Way. Homesite on Lake Sequoyah with exceptional views of the lake, privacy, city water and sewer. Great reduced price! $347,000. MLS# 77522

Lovely Scaly Mountain on the Atlanta side of Highlands. Live in a wonderful community above this adorable cabin that could be used for a variety of businesses. Excellent visibility from the road. The perfect home for a couple who is just starting out or for a savvy investor. MLS #81348 $109,900

Great location in Chestnut Hill on a level lot with a small fenced dog yard. Lovely front porch plus a screened porch in the back. On a culdesac. HOA does landscaping. MLS#82769 $290,000.

Every space in this 3/3 home was updated. Two tired deck with views of the mountains the lake and the 5th fairway at Highlands Falls Country Club. The floor plan is perfect for entertaining. In addition, there is a one bedroom guesthouse with a new kitchen. MLS #82523 $797,000

Highlands Mountain Club with great mountain view. Spacious 3br/2ba, two bath spacious condo. Enjoy the pool, tennis, and clubhouse. It comes furnished, with dishes and linens, so just move in. $249,000. MLS #82270

Highlands Falls condo with 3br/3ba and great golf course view, sunroom, stone fireplace, vaulted ceiling. Just reduced to an amazing $295,000! MLS# 73808

Best buy in Highlands Falls Country Club! 3br/2ba single unit detached Golf Villa with lake and fairway view. Reduced to $249,000. MLS# 78712

4/3 home located in the private gated community of Whiteside Estates. Home features beautiful hardwood floors throughout with pine wood walls and brick fireplace. Great deck with a covered area of the master bedroom. MLS #82461 $347,500

New home designed by C. Allen Brown with top of the line kitchen with all Viking appliances. Heart pine floors, Kohler fixtures, an outdoor living area with stone fireplace. Fabulous setting on a pond and waterfall. MLS #82172 $1,045,000

Country Club. The floor plan is two tired deck with views of the lake, privacy, sunroom, stone fireplace, family room and lovely yard. $279,000. MLS#81623

Rocky Knob. A gated lake community. Exceptional mountain view, 3br/2ba with fireplace, vaulted ceilings, covered and open decks and meticulously maintained. $385,000. MLS #81329

Wonderful home in prestigious Wildcat Cliffs CC. Just a two minute golf cart ride to the club house. Fantastic views from the back porch of Whiteside Mountain and Cullasaja Club golf course. MLS#82872 $375,000

Close to all the amenities of MountainTop Golf and Lake Club. This wonderful 5 bedroom mountain home was designed by Summerour. Open floor plan, amazing kitchen with oversized island. Three fireplaces, fabulous master suite. MLS #68782 $2,295,000

New home designed by C. Allen Brown with top of the line kitchen with all Viking appliances. Heart pine floors, Kohler fixtures, an outdoor living area with stone fireplace. Fabulous setting on a pond and waterfall. MLS #82172 $1,045,000

Fronts on Lake Sequoyah and amazing view of the lake! Great value for this 3br/2ba furnished cottage, wood floors, stone fireplace, family room and lovely yard. $279,000. MLS#81623

Just 5 minutes from Downtown Highlands. 3br/2ba with private setting, lots of glass to bring the outdoors in, additional lot included. $369,000. MLS# 82336

Privacy with some winter view from this 2br/2ba home close to Town. A third room furnished as a den. Split bedroom plan with garage and workshop/studio space. $339,000. MLS #82099.

Charm exudes from this 2013 remodel. 3/2 Main house with fantastic Master Suite plus two studio bedroom cottages with full bath for guests. Very private setting on road with more expensive homes. MLS #82269 $399,000

This 4/5 beautiful home is located in the desirable Highlands CC. Home is immaculate and features a fabulous kitchen that opens up into the dining area great for entertaining. MLS #81619 $999,999

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New Beginnings

Dr. Mark Ford
First Baptist Church Highlands

Christmas and New Year’s Day are about new beginnings. New Year’s Day is about resolutions, or renewed resolve to make the new year better. We focus on such issues as diet and weight loss, trying to be on time for work and meetings, not to smoke, having a better attitude, getting organized, avoiding gossip, spending more time with our family, getting out of debt, going to church more faithfully, reading our Bibles or good books, being more thankful, and so on. There’s just something about the New Year that cries out for a clean start and improvement over the past year. What seems to be consistent for most everyone is this need to improve or do better, just because we acknowledge our failure or failures in the past year. Basically, what we are saying is that we want this next year to be better and we want to do better, which in turn is an acknowledgement that we are not always successful in life or our goals.

But it must also be acknowledged that most “New Year Resolutions” don’t succeed past March for over half of us, and only 8% actually make it through the year according to the Journal of Clinical Psychology. Half of Americans will make new resolutions in 2016 to improve some aspect of their lives, but over 90% will be disappointed by December of next year. Allow me to offer an explanation. We are trying to use good intentions and will power to change our human nature. But the Bible makes it abundantly clear - our nature is weighted toward sinful proclivities, negative thoughts and behavior. Most of us have a hard time at self-improvement.

You can’t have a New Year without a “new you” – a changed you from the heart outward. Christmas is about the Lord Jesus Christ coming into this world to make all things new, beginning with your heart, soul and mind. His life, message of hope, sacrifice, and resurrection made possible a new world and a new people. It doesn’t mean that your new year resolutions will succeed completely – for we still carry the burden of the old self that wants to have its way. We will have to wait for heaven for the total makeover. But one thing is for sure, you no longer have to accomplish your goals in this life through will power. You now have the proper foundation to become a new you, start new behaviors and have a new life. You have the Lord Jesus Christ to help. So allow me to give some advice. Don’t start the New Year without first inviting the Christ of Christmas into your life. With Christ, resolutions can become realities. And then you can have a great new year!
The Highlands Police log entries from November 27. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.

Nov. 27
• At 4:20 p.m., officers received a call about a person being bit by a dog at a residence on Dogwood Ave.

Nov. 24
• At 3 p.m., officers responded to a burglary with forced entry at a residence on N. 4th Street.
  Dec. 10
• At 12:55 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on N. 5th Street.

Dec. 5
• At 11:20 a.m., officers were notified of the damage to property at a shop at Wild Thyme Restaurant where a no parking sign and post was damaged by a vehicle.

Dec. 7
• At 4 p.m., officers were notified of a fraud impersonation at a residence on Village Walk.
  Dec. 11
• At 2:20 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident in Highlands Plaza.
  Dec. 8
• At 10:27 a.m., officers responded to an attended death at the town pool.
  Dec. 12
• At 10:57 p.m., officers received a call at a residence on Cullasaja Drive where the victim was pushed.

...RE TRANS continued from page 17

...RE TRANS continued from page 17

Police Reports

W. Scott, 9/25/2015, 255000, Harrington, Claire Ann Trustee, 366620
Tec, LLC, 3/17/2015, 584000, Wearn, Mildred C, 737630
G. R., 5/19/2015, 0, Waldron, Stuart E., 1500
Lynne H., 11/10/2015, 587500, Smithwick, Ansley D., 690440
Paul, 8/31/2015, 170000, Crow, Patricia L Trustee, 224890
Ties LLC, 4/6/2015, 0, Trophy Properties LLC, 220320
Con Bank, Inc., 7/7/2015, 1354000, Anglin, Mildred C., 2286760
William Roger, 6/26/2015, 85000, Geoghegan, Judy B, 169690
Jr., 2/17/2015, 180000, Young, Paul, 281530
Home Loan Mort. Corp., 8/25/2015, 0, Gilbert, Rod, 290000
...To be continued in the Jan. 7 edition...
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THE HIGHLANDS BBQ CO. Is seeking Servers, Hosts, Bartenders and Line Cooks. If Interested, please call 828-200-1500 or Send a Resume to HighlandsBBQCompany@Gmail.com (st. 7/2)

SALES ASSOCIATE FOR HIGH END CLOTHING STORE IN HIGHLANDS, NC full time “with benefits. part time and seasonal. Must be available to work weekends. Retail clothing sales experience preferred. Please call 828-200-0928_. (st. 4/30)

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LOT . 10 MINUTES FROM DOWNTOWN HIGHLANDS. 2.01 acres with Mountain Ridge and Meadow Views between Bridal Veil Falls, Dry Falls & Cullasaja Falls, Gorge. Lot cleared, driveway and new septic system. Tax Value is $89,410., Quick Sale at $49,900. Firm. 828-200-0949. (st. 9/3)

WOODED LOT W/ STREAM FOR SALE – MIRRORMONT AREA, Berit Ln., 1.45 acres, 4-BR septic permit, walk-to-town, Priced to sell. 770-861-4249. (st. 7/23)

ACRE LOT HIGHLANDS, NC Corner Lot Highlands Glen, level with some gentle slopes excavation and foundation expenses would be reasonable, underground power installed. Stream runs year round could be configured to make a small pond, good water sources for well. Space for outbuildings or RV, boat storage. 6 Miles to downtown. $27,000 possible owner financing 828-507-2066 (st. 7/2)

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FURNISHED HOME FOR RENT 2/2. Mt. Lori Dr. Quiet street with no through traffic. Minutes to town. Very well kept with nice furniture and pretty yard. Wood burning fireplace, open kitchen, deck in back, hardwood floors, garage. $1200 does not in...
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ANTIQUE LARGE COMBINATION SAFE, antique mammy bench; vintage 4-wheel farm scale; new G-scale train equipment; new 4 oak/steel vegetable stands – all in great condition and reasonably priced. Bruce 828-200-0228. (st. 12/17)

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TOWN OF HIGHLANDS JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

FINANCE DIRECTOR:

The Town of Highlands is accepting applications for the position of Finance Director. This position performs professional and supervisory work in planning, organizing, and executing the accounting functions for the Town of Highlands government, annual budget of approximately 13 million dollars.

The Finance Director is responsible for interpretation of local, state, and federal policies, statutes, and procedures and insures overall compliance, adherence, and accuracy in all financial activities.

Responsibilities include: purchasing, financial reporting, general ledger, funds and grants accounting, cash management and investments, accounts receivables and payables, debt service management, and related tasks. The Finance Director is responsible for the supervision of the finance staff, and work is performed in accordance with established Town finance procedures, local ordinances, and NC laws and General Statutes governing local governmental finance, generally accepted accounting principles, and GAAFR (Governmental Accounting, Auditing, and Financial Reporting). Work is performed under the supervision of the Town Manager.

Minimum requirements for the position include a Bachelor’s Degree from an accredited college or university, in accounting, finance, business or public administration; or equivalent experience; and ability to obtain a North Carolina Certified Public Finance Officer Certification. A minimum of 5 years’ experience in North Carolina municipal or county government administration, or financial management and accounting.

Preferred special requirements are a Master’s degree in accounting or financial management, certified as a Municipal Financial Officer by the North Carolina Local Governmental Finance Officers Association and certified as a Notary Public.

Salary will be commensurate with experience and qualifications. The Town of Highlands provides a competitive benefits package, which includes participation in NC Government Employees Retirement System membership and benefits in health, dental, life, vision, long term disability insurance; optional life and auxiliary coverages; 401K and 457 deferred compensation plans; paid holidays; and annual and sick leave. This is an exempt position. The successful applicant is subject to a criminal background check, a pre-employment drug screening and passing a physical examination.

Applications are available at Town Hall or downloaded from the Town’s website at www.highlandsnc.org under Employment. Resumes may be submitted in addition to applications. All completed and signed Employment Applications may be submitted in person to Sonjia Gibson, HR Director, at the Town Hall, 210 N. Fourth Street, Highlands, NC, by email to sonjia.gibson@highlandsnc.org , by fax to 828-526-2595 or by U.S. Mail to the attention of Sonjia Gibson, HR Director, at PO Box 460, Highlands, NC 28741 . This position has a closing date of January 15, 2016, and applications will be reviewed as received. Only candidates selected for an interview will be contacted. The Town of Highlands is an Equal Opportunity/Drug-Free Employer. (1/14/16)
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**Paoletti**

We wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!  
We close on Jan. 2 for the winter.

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